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In Homage to

Professor Rene¹ Wellek

*the distinguished American literary theorist, critical
historian, comparatist scholar and Sterling Professor
Emeritus of Comparative Literature of Yale University
(U.S.A.) on his 75th birthday (August 22nd, 1903)*

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PROSPECT AND RETROSPECT *

RENÉ WELLEK

Speaking on such a festive occasion, feeling as I do gratitude to those who spoke so warmly about me and my work, I could easily be tempted to indulge in reminiscences which, at my age, will inevitably sound nostalgic, regretful, even sentimental. I don't want to think of myself, however as dead and buried. An old friend of mine who occasionally visits this library from out of town wrote to me that he had "the shock of my life in seeing books of yours exhibited in the Sterling Library. I thought you might have died — and with no obituary, on account of the newspaper strike." He was reassured when he looked closer. I myself want to think of this occasion as a stimulus to finishing my big project of *A History of Modern Criticism*. Two more volumes are to come: the fifth, devoted entirely to English and American criticism in the first half of this century; the sixth and last, to the continent of Europe. The fifth is far advanced. Some of you will have seen the articles on individual critics scattered over several periodicals which will be used in an updated and revised form: on A. C. Bradley, on Virginia Woolf, on Ezra Pound, on T. S. Eliot, on I. A. Richards, on F. R. Leavis, to list those devoted to English critics, and on Irving Babbitt, Paul Elmer More, Edmund Wilson, John Crowe Ransom, Cleanth Brooks, Kenneth Burke, R. P. Blackmur, and William K. Wimsatt, to which I shall add a speech reflecting and defending the methods of my *History* and a general essay on "The New Criticism: Pro and Contra" recently published in *Critical Inquiry*. An essay on Allen Tate written three years ago has been lying about with a German publisher of a two-volume collection of papers on all the main figures of English and American literary theory from Sir Phillip Sidney to Northrop Frye.

* A Speech on the Occasion of the Celebration of the Seventy-fifth Birthday of René Wellek, Delivered at the Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, on September 28, 1978.

The sixth volume is far less advanced, but I have written articles on Benedetto Croce, on the Classical Tradition in France, on Charles Dubos, on Albert Thibaudet, on Friedrich Gundolf and his erstwhile pupil Max Kommerell, on the three great Romance scholars who wrote in German, Ernst Robert Curtius, Leo Spitzer, and Erich Auerbach, on Emil Staiger, on the Russian Formalists, on Modern Czech Criticism, and on the so-called Prague School. Many gaps have to be filled. I have, for instance, nothing written yet on Spanish criticism. Thus my study and writing are planned for several years ahead. I also have other commitments and plans. For years I have promised to bring out a new revised edition of my first book *Immanuel Kant in England*, which was published by the Princeton University Press in 1931 but was printed in Prague. It contains many misprints as it was set by printers ignorant of English. My own English was then still deficient and there are errors in the transcripts from manuscripts I had trouble in deciphering. Since then I have also turned up a fair amount of new information which I hope to incorporate. I am also less confident of the strongly Hegelian interpretation of Kant to which I was then committed. Most of the book I have retyped in a revised version, but I am still stymied by the chapter on Coleridge. The new edition of Coleridge from the Princeton University Press, both of the *Notebooks* and of the collected writings, is far from complete. I will not see its completion in my lifetime, I fear. Without the full text of the *Notebooks* and without access to the so-called *Magnum Opus* still unprinted, a completely satisfactory account of Coleridge's relations to Kant cannot be given. I cannot be confident that I shall accomplish everything I plan. There is always the proviso : God willing.

When I look back on my work I see today how clearly it reflects the changes in literary scholarship and criticism which occurred during the fifty-four years of my writing life. When in 1922 I came to the Czech University in Prague to study Germanic philology, I was confronted with the then prevalent type of philological and historical scholarship, mainly inherited from the German tradition with its roots in Romanticism, implying a glorification of the dim Teutonic and Slavic past and of the Middle Ages. The Professor of Germanic philology, Josef Janko (1869-1947), lectured on Gothic vocalism in the first semester and on Gothic consonantism in the second. I came from a *Gymnasium* where I had learned to parse and translate Latin and some Greek but had not the foggiest idea about phonetics. I could not distinguish a dental from a labial. The Professor of German literature, Arnost Kraus (1859-1943), gave a

seminar on the *Minnesänger*, patiently going through every poet, in the Manesse Manuscript, telling the biography of every poet, the stanzaic form and the analogues of every poem. Reading the *Nibelungenlied* in Middle High German, he was much concerned with the exact route the company took down the Danube to their doom at Etzel's court. In another seminar Professor Kraus distributed letters he had collected from castles and archives in Bohemia, written by more or less well-known German and Austrian writers and had us edit them: we had to transcribe them from the original, which he entrusted to us freely, ascertain the addressee, the date, explain allusions, and so on. I got a fine letter of Christoph Martin Wieland, the eighteenth-century rococo poet, and one by August von Platen, the early nineteenth-century classicist. It was good exercise: it let you loose in the library.

For a time I also attended the seminar of Professor August Sauer, then the great light of the German University. I remember having to write a report on a proclamation supposedly written by Napoleon from Elba concocted by the German pamphleteer and romantic Josef Görres, and being commended that my paper was so thorough and exhaustive that "no grass can grow after Wellek." It was an ambiguous compliment, and even then my attitude toward this kind of scholarship was ambiguous, as it has remained all my life.

I found rather what I wanted in a younger Professor of German literature, Otokar Fischer (1883-1938), who had written books on Heinrich von Kleist and Nietzsche. He was a brilliant lecturer mainly concerned with the psychology of his favorite figures in German literature: his book on Heine, unfortunately buried in the Czech language, grew out of a seminar I attended. In 1908 he had been one of the first (or possibly the very first) literary scholar who had used psychoanalysis for the interpretation of a literary work: the dreams in Gottfried Keller's novel *Der grüne Heinrich*.

In 1924 Fischer founded the new review *Kritika* together with F. X. Salda (1867-1937), and there I published my very first article, severely criticizing the Czech translation of *Romeo and Juliet*: a bold move for a young man as the translator, J. V. Sládek, was a revered poet and his translations from Shakespeare considered masterpieces. Salda was the dominant figure in Czech literary criticism since the 1890's who had fought the battles for Symbolism and all forms of modernism and who had preserved the allegiance of even the youngest avant-garde poets by his sympathy for everything new and revolutionary. During the

First World War he had been appointed Professor of Western Literatures at the University (though a freelance journalist), and he still lectured on French literature, reluctantly, casually, even grumpily, obviously considering his duties at the University distractions from his writing. Though I admired his early writings I was disappointed by his performance in the lecture room and soon gave up visiting him in his apartment as he was surrounded by a coterie of young men and pontificated in an overbearing manner I found repellent.

Then there was Václav Tille (1867-1937), Professor of Comparative Literature, a subject then flourishing in the Slavic countries, which was conceived largely as comparative folklore, thematology, *Stoffgeschichte*. Tille had written successful fairy-tales himself and considered all oral literature to be descended from upper-class literature. He had an amazing memory for themes and plots and was also a dreaded theater critic who would retell the story of a play to make it sound utterly ridiculous and absurd. He was a witty man, basically nihilistic in his views of scholarship and criticism. Still, I sympathized with his elaborate refutation of the determinism of Hippolyte Taine and his general skepticism about causal explanation in literary studies.

Finally there was Vilém Mathesius (1882-1945), the Professor of English who later became the founder and President of the Prague Linguistic Circle. He had been an early proponent of descriptive linguistics, of which I knew nothing at that time. But I knew his solid handbooks on Anglo-Saxon and Middle English literature and attended his lectures and seminars in which he expounded the history of older English literature soberly, descriptively. His literary taste was determined by his admiration for Shaw and H. G. Wells; the tradition of the realistic English novel as his general outlook was empirical, concerned with the cultural and ethical values of the British Protestant tradition he thought would be good for his nation.

When I look back on these teachers of mine I consider myself lucky to have come to the University of Prague in a time of its flowering, when the old scholarship was changing under the impact of new tastes and the new criticism. The University of Prague, situated in the capital, allowed the collaboration of scholarship and criticism which I still feel to be the ideal solution. But I must confess that I withheld full allegiance from every one of my teachers. I was quite willing to do historical and philological research but felt strongly its limitations.

I admired Otokar Fischer immensely but drew back from his psychological and psychoanalytical concerns. I could not become a follower of F. X. Salda as I did not share his, what seemed to me uncritical search for novelty. I was quite uninterested in Tille's concern for oral literature. I could not share the view of English literature propounded or implied by Mathesius. I cared then only for Shakespeare, the Romantic and Victorian poets, and after my first visit to England in 1924 for Donne and the metaphysicals. In St. Paul's Cathedral I had seen the tomb of John Donne wrapped in his shroud and picked up an anthology of seventeenth century English poetry compiled by J. H. Massingham which impressed me deeply. I was prepared by the then newly revived interest in German and Czech Baroque poetry.

I had made one attempt to break away from Prague. In 1923 I visited Heidelberg, heard a lecture of Friedrich Gundolf and called on him. I had read *Shakespeare und der deutsche Geist* and his book on *Goethe* and thought that here literary scholarship was freed from pedantry and allowed bold judgments and generalizations. I shared the new enthusiasm for Hölderlin, on whom Gundolf had written perceptively. But in Heidelberg I was repelled by the atmosphere of awestruck adoration surrounding him: I realized that the unspoken demand for total allegiance and even abject subservience to the ethos and views of the George circle was foreign to my nature. I returned to Prague and shifted from German literature to English. I became the assistant to Mathesius and wrote a thesis under his direction on "Carlyle and Romanticism," mainly on his German contacts, a topic chosen defiantly to run counter to Mathesius' own predilections. I received a D. Phil. in June 1926 and spent then several months in England preparing a monograph on my new project, Andrew Marvell, whom I wanted to interpret in relation to Baroque French and Latin poetry. At that time there was little written on Marvell aside from the splendid essay by T. S. Eliot and a thin biography by Augustin Birrell. It was a great blow when I found out, at Oxford, that a new critical edition was coming out and that a large book, in French, by Pierre Legouis was in preparation. I had to postpone my plan indefinitely, as it turned out. I thus welcomed a fellowship to the United States: to Princeton University. I set foot on the soil of this country for the first time in September 1927. At Princeton I attended four seminars as if I were a graduate student (though I held a postdoctoral fellowship). For the first time in my life I had instruction in English, had to write regular papers and do prescribed

reading. I was suddenly thrown back into the type of scholarship I wanted to break away from in Prague. At Princeton at that time there was no instruction in modern literature or American literature. I was severely discouraged from taking work with G. M. Harper, the biographer of Wordsworth. Of the five teachers I had, Thomas Marc Parrott taught a seminar on *Hamlet* where we did nothing but make a line-by-line comparison of the two Quartos with the Folio. Charles Grosvenor Osgood taught a seminar on Spenser mainly concerned with sources and background. My first assignment was "Spenser's Irish Rivers," which required looking into old maps of Ireland. Robert Kilburn Root had us read Alexander Pope and with his ironic and sarcastic wit, managed to convey something of his ethos, and J. E. Brown, a younger man who died very early, expounded the ideas of Dr. Johnson with sympathy. A fellow student praised a fourth seminar I took then in addition to the usual load of three. Morris W. Croll propagated Croce's aesthetics and interpreted English lyrical poetry. He was then writing a paper on English Baroque prose. A reprint says that I persuaded him to call it Baroque (he had called it "Attic" before). But Croll had read Wölfflin and did not need me to know about Baroque. From Root and Brown I learned something about eighteenth-century criticism. From reading around I imbibed something of the critical atmosphere of the time. I read H. L. Mencken and the early Van Wyck Brooks criticizing the American business civilization. I read the American New Humanists, then much in the limelight. Later I met Paul Elmer More, who lived in Princeton; he lent me copies of the Cambridge Platonists. I heard Irving Babbitt lecture at Harvard before I returned to Czechoslovakia in June 1930. At Princeton I was impressed by eighteenth-century Neoclassicism and the new antiromantic polemics of the New Humanists, but again I cannot say that I was converted. I realize now that I was lucky in returning to escape the Depression years and I thus remained unaffected by the prevailing Marxism of that time. I had read some Marxist criticism in Prague but remained indifferent, possibly because in Czechoslovakia it was identified with the Communist party, rightly considered a tool of Stalin.

When I returned to Prague I had the manuscript of my book *Immanuel Kant in England* more or less in shape. In my two and a half years at Princeton, at Smith, and then again at Princeton, I had developed an increasing interest in philosophy: mainly the standard British authors and the Germans, Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. In Prague in my student years I had avoided

the professors of philosophy, who seemed to me uninteresting expounders of positivism. As an instructor in Princeton (1929-30) I attended a seminar on Hegel's *Logic* taught by a young Dutchman, Veltman, and Professor Ledger Wood. My thesis on Carlyle had led me to Coleridge and Coleridge led to Kant and Schelling. In the Widener Library in the summer of 1928 I discovered many totally neglected books, articles, and references to Kant in the 1770's and the early decades of the nineteenth century. Stopping over in London on my way back to Prague I read the manuscript of Coleridge's *Logic* in the British Museum and discovered, to my dismay, that it was nothing but a compilation of passages from the *Critique of Pure Reason* interspersed with passages from Moses Mendelssohn and pious reflections by Coleridge himself. My chapter on Coleridge made me the exponent of a view of Coleridge's borrowings and his position in a history of philosophy which was and perhaps is still resented.

Back in Prague I submitted *Immanuel Kant in England* as a second thesis (*Habilitation*) which was necessary to be admitted as *Docent* to lecture at the University on English literature. My topic was completely alien to Mathesius, but it testifies to his open-mindedness that he accepted it, though he required me in addition to write a paper on a medieval topic. It was then that I composed a little treatise on *The Pearl* (1933), my only excursion into medieval studies, which confronted me with problems of symbolism and theological and autobiographical interpretation which I dismissed or solved in a way which, I am told, is still convincing.

When I arrived in Prague, the Linguistic Circle had been founded during my absence. I joined it immediately and took part in its sessions. I attended a Conference on Phonology in December 1930 and met then or before Roman Jakobson, Jan Mukarovsky, and the other members of that splendid group. As the new *Docent* I had to give an inaugural lecture: it was on "Empiricism and Idealism in English Literature," strongly siding with the idealist and Platonic tradition in English poetry. In the Prague years I came more and more under the influence of my older colleagues at the Circle and of their models, the Russian formalists. But again I withheld full allegiance. In a review of the Czech translation of Shklovsky's *Theory of Prose* in 1934 I voiced many misgivings about the extremes of his mechanistic formalism, and in a paper on Jakobson's and Mukarovsky's history of Czech versification I questioned their views of literary

evolution. I argued for modifications of their formalism in the direction of a judgmental criticism and an interest in philosophical implications. I had read Roman Ingarden's *Das literarische Kunstwerk* (1931) and had met Ingarden at the International Congress of Philosophy in Prague in 1934.

In 1935 I was again uprooted. As prospects for a professorship at Prague were distant, I accepted an offer to become lecturer in Czech language and literature at the School of Slavonic Studies of London University. The job was paid by the Czechoslovakian Ministry of Education, and I kept my foothold at the University of Prague as the presumptive successor to Mathesius. In London I formulated my theoretical conceptions in a paper entitled "The Theory of Literary History," published in English in the sixth volume of *Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Prague* in 1936. I mention this because the paper was reproduced with little change in the volume *Literary Scholarship*, edited by Norman Foerster, in 1941 and again as the last chapter of *Theory of Literature*. I held these views and formulated them before I returned to the United States and before I knew anything about the American New Criticism.

In England I soon learned something about I. A. Richards, whose behavioristic psychology could not appeal to me, coming as I did from the Prague school and the phenomenology of Ingarden, a student of Husserl. In Cambridge in the summer of 1936 I met F. R. Leavis and some of his friends, Lionel Knights and Henri Fluchère. I sympathized with Leavis' anti-academic attitude and soon began to contribute to *Scrutiny*. I wrote also a long critical account of I. A. Richards, William Empson, and F. R. Leavis for the Czech periodical of the Prague circle (*Slovo a slovenost*). In a long letter I tried, incautiously, to persuade Leavis that in his newly published book *Revaluation* he had misinterpreted the philosophy of Blake, Wordsworth, and Shelley. He printed the letter in *Scrutiny* and wrote an answer, "Philosophy and Criticism" (1937), in which he took me to task as a philosopher who did not understand that criticism is not concerned with ideas but with concrete sensitive readings. This piece has pursued me all my life: it is reprinted, without my original letter, in Leavis' *Common Pursuit* and is widely quoted. I became a straw man to knock down, though I actually agree with Leavis' general distinction between philosophy and criticism, even though I continue to object to the antitheoretical bias of much English criticism and of Leavis in particular.

In addition to my duties as lecturer in Czech, which induced me to study the Czech National Revival, English travelers in Bohemia, and the influ-

ence of Byron on the Czech romantic poet K. H. Mácha, I pursued a scheme that had emerged naturally from my preoccupation with the theory of literary history. I worked for several years in the Museum on a history of literary historiography in England. When, after the invasion of Prague by Hitler on March 15, 1939, I had to give up any thought of returning to Prague, I decided to emigrate to the United States. I secured a position in the English department of the University of Iowa through the good offices of Professor Thomas Marc Parrot. I took with me the manuscript of a book, *The Rise of English Literary History*, eventually published in 1941. Before going out to Iowa I spent six weeks in the Sterling Library in the summer of 1939, trying to finish my book. Here I met the late James Marshall Osborn and through him Maynard Mack and Louis L. Martz.

I knew only one person at Iowa and nothing of the University. I even had to look up its exact location on a map in the British Museum. But I was grateful to get a foothold in this country, which was the only one that offered a refuge from the approaching war. At Iowa I was immediately plunged into the conflict between historical scholarship and criticism. As I was appointed by Norman Foerster, the Director of the School of Letters, a staunch New Humanist, I was lined up on the side of criticism against historical scholarship. I still remember an encounter with one of the literary historians, who reacted furiously to a suggestion that he had also written some criticism. "This is the worst insult anybody ever paid me," he said, flushing deeply. Foerster that very year had brought Austin Warren from Boston University: with a few younger men we made up the "critical faction," and we composed a collective volume, *Literary Scholarship: Its Aims and Methods* (1941), to which Austin Warren contributed the chapter on criticism and I the chapter on literary history. The forties brought about the establishment of criticism as an academic subject in American universities. The text book *Understanding Poetry* by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren (1938) was the main pedagogical breakthrough. R. P. Warren taught twice at Iowa as a visiting professor. At the newly founded English institute meeting at Columbia University I met Cleanth Brooks, Allen Tate, and W. K. Wimsatt in 1940 and 1941. I was deeply impressed by the New Criticism, but again I remained an outsider who had come with different preconceptions. Austin Warren and I felt that we had sailed under false colors when contributed to a book edited by Norman Foerster. We formed the project of writing a book on *Theory of*

Literature which would combine the new critical outlook of Austin Warren with my knowledge of Continental developments. *Theory of Literature* came out after many delays partly due to my involvement with war work (I taught an Army Area and Language Program in Czech) and to Mrs. Warren's illness and death. The date of publication, January 1949, is deceptive: most of the book was written in the years 1945-47 and much dated back in earlier printed work. I mentioned the Prague article "The Theory of Literary History;" the chapter on "The Mode of Existence of a Literary Work of Art" reprinted an article published in the last number of the old *Southern Review* in 1942. The book was not thought of as a textbook, but it made its way in the American graduate schools, and in other countries, to judge from the translations into twenty-one languages. The newest is into Russian, of which I have not yet seen a copy.

At Iowa as a European with a knowledge of languages I was put to teach a course in the European novel and I gave a seminar in German-English literary and intellectual relations. I had long been convinced that no single literature can be studied without going constantly beyond its confines. I embraced the cause of comparative literature as a worthy subject alongside the old national literatures. An ideal of a supernational study of literature seemed to me called for also by the bright hopes of the aftermath of the War.

When I was called to Yale in 1946 as Professor of Slavic and comparative literature I came here in something of a missionary spirit. Yale had no chair, no program, and no department, and had never had one. At Harvard and Columbia old departments lay dormant. At Harvard Harry Levin, in the very same year, was entrusted with resuscitating the subject and brought an Italian Slavist, Renato Poggioli, to revitalize the program. A quarterly, *Comparative Literature*, began publication in 1949. The first number contains my essay "The Concept of Romanticism in Literary History," in which I tried to refute A. O. Lovejoy's famous argument against its very existence.

At first, the Yale program was very small. I was the only person on a full-time appointment. Much later Lowry Nelson, Jr., one of the first Ph. D. s of the program, was brought in, and joint appointments with other departments were arranged. The program became an independent, full-fledged department as late as 1960. It has flowered also after my retirement in 1972 and has

produced a splendid array of students. I myself directed some fifty dissertations. I trust the company who have come from the department have, whatever the variety of convictions they hold and interests they pursue, at least two things in common : devotion to scholarship and complete freedom to follow their own bent.

Since *Theory of Literature* I devoted most of my energy left over from teaching and administration to writing a large-scale international *History of Modern Criticism*. It seemed inevitable to look for support, justification and possibly rectification of the theory of literature in history. Theory emerges from history just as history itself can only be understood with questions and answers in mind. History and theory explain and implicate each other. There is a profound unity of fact and idea, past and present.

The volumes that have accompanied the *History. Concepts of Criticism* (1963), *Confrontations* (1965), *Discriminations* (1970), and the new scattered articles which I hope to collect under the title of a key essay, "The Attack on Literature," are conceived in the same spirit and try to come to terms with new developments in America and Europe.

Looking back on my work I am struck with my detachment from all the phases I went through: historical scholarship, Symbolist criticism in the wake of Salda or Gundolf, the American New Humanism, the Prague School shaped by Russian Formalism, the Leavis group, the American New Criticism. I may be a Laodicean, but I hope that I have preserved my own integrity and a core of convictions: that the aesthetic experience differs from other experiences and sets off the realm of art, of fictionality, of *Schein*, from life; that the literary work of art, while a linguistic construct, at the same time refers to the world outside, that it cannot therefore be described only by linguistic means but has a meaning telling of man, society, and nature; that all arguments for relativism meet a final barrier; that we are confronted, as students of literature, with an object, the work of art, out there (whatever may be its ultimate ontological status) which challenges us to understand and interpret it; that there is thus no complete liberty of interpretation. Analysis, interpretation, evaluation are interconnected stages of a single procedure. Evaluation grows out of understanding. We as critics learn to distinguish between art and non-art and should have the courage of our

convictions. The lawyer knows or thinks he knows what is right and what is true and what is false; the physician knows what is health and what is disease; only the poor humanist is floundering, uncertain of himself and his calling instead of proudly asserting the life of the mind which is the life of Reason.

* Sterling Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature
Yale University
Connecticut

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RENÉ WELLEK :

PROFESSION OF CRITICISM

MARTIN BUCCO

In the fall of 1978, the distinguished American literary theorist, critical historian, and comparatist scholar René Wellek spoke at the Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, on the occasion of an exhibition of his publications and the celebration of his seventy-fifth birthday. After outlining the main tasks ahead of him, he looked back on his writing life over the past fifty-four years and noted that his books reflected the many changes in literary scholarship and criticism. Still, he hoped that he had preserved his own integrity and a core of convictions. Wellek, whose impulse has always been to help clarify the methodological Tower of Babel, once explained : "My views and aspirations are best expounded in my books." No doubt many Indian literary scholars know the convictions and aspirations in Wellek's twelve books, if not in all of his hundreds of scattered essays and reviews. In honor of his seventy-fifth birthday, René Wellek's friends in India might like to know more about the early stages of his remarkable development, particularly about the formative years preceding his first scholarly publication as an undergraduate.

René Wellek was born in Vienna on August 22, 1903, the oldest of three children. In this old Hapsburg capital—cradle of much contemporary thought in psychology, medicine, philosophy, politics, art, music, and literature—Wellek and his younger brother Albert (1904-1972) spent their boyhoods. The culture of Wellek's parents influenced his development profoundly. His father Bronislav Wellek (1872-1959), then a government lawyer, was a Czech from a petty-bourgeois Catholic family in Prague. Known as a *Liedersänger*, a Wagnerian, and an opera reviewer, Bronislav Wellek also was an ardent Czech nationalist, a transmitter of Czech values to the Austrian consciousness, a biographer of the

composer Bedrich Smetana and a translator of the poets Jaroslav Vrchlicky and J. S. Machar. René Wellek's mother, *née* Gabriele von Zelewsky (1881-1950), came from a different background. Born in Rome, she bloomed into a dazzling beauty who spoke German, Italian, French, and English. René Wellek's maternal grandfather was a West Prussian nobleman of Polish origin; Wellek's grandmother was a Swiss Protestant from picturesque Schaffhausen. After the nobleman's death, his wife and daughter travelled on the Continent. In Vienna, Gabriele von Zelewsky met Bronislav Wellek.

In the crowded capital the young couple and their sons moved from apartment to apartment. From 1906 to 1908 Bronislav Wellek served under the Austrian prime minister, Baron von Beck, to whom he gave Czech lessons. In 1912 the Welleks settled in a large house with garden and terrace. At home and in the kaleidoscopic Danubian metropolis with its baroque elegance and *Kaffeehaus* culture, René and Albert grew up in an atmosphere rich in linguistic, aesthetic, political, and religious overtones. Since the Protestantism of his Swiss grandmother prevailed in the family, the Brothers Wellek had been baptized in the Lutheran Church. Even the agnostic Bronislav became a nominal Lutheran.

As a boy René Wellek read voraciously. He and his brother developed "crazes" for all kinds of encyclopedic and historical information—geography, science, religion, literature, military campaigns. Familiar with Viennese opera, René Wellek also took piano lessons. At school he and his brother spoke German, but sensed anti-Czech feeling. At home and on vacations in the river valleys and pinewoods of Bohemia, the brothers spoke Czech. A month after he became ten, René Wellek started Latin lessons, and for eight hours a week for eight years he read much of Livy, Cornelius Nepos, Caesar, Cicero, Ovid, Vergil, Horace, Catullus, and Tacitus.

During the First World War, René Wellek recalls, food in Vienna grew scarce and cannon boomed in the Carpathians. When he was thirteen he started Greek, and during the next three years he read Xenophon, much Homer, some Plato, and some Lucian. During his convalescence from scarlet fever, his father read to him the whole of *The Pickwick Papers* in German. When he returned finally to the *Währing Gymnasium*, he was permitted to substitute English or French for his interrupted Greek studies. Wellek's choice of English influenced his life decisively. Though he still spent long hours at his Latin, he grew increasingly sceptical of mechanical instruction.

With the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918, the Welleks (and infant Elizabeth) moved to the ancient cathedral city of Prague, that picturesque, gloomy settlement at the entrance to Eastern Europe. "Czechoslovakia after the war," Wellek notes, "more than ever, stood at the crossroads of all cultural influences, in consequence of her geographical position, her Slavonic language and her Western sympathies." Like his father high in government office, the schoolboy René Wellek identified with the new Czechoslovakia. "The outcome of the great war, which for the Czechs meant the fulfilment of a centuries-old desire, was a surprise and shock for the Germans in Bohemia and Moravia." Still, the first president of the Republic, Tomas Masaryk, hoped that Czechoslovakia might become the Switzerland of Central Europe and Prague the Athens.

No English, however, was taught at Wellek's *Realgymnasium*. Nevertheless he, continued to read English literature at home, particularly Shakespeare and the Romantic poets. In school he studied botany, history, geography, and three literatures—Latin German, and Czech. He read a good deal of Reformation history and became familiar with the German classics. After reading Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, he puzzled over his mother's sentimental piety.

In 1922, Wellek entered Charles University (the Czech University of Prague). Viewing his father's legal profession as boring and his brother's medical interests as unappealing, Wellek prevailed upon his father to allow him to study Germanic philology. Academe promised intellectual adventure and social responsibility, art and learning, passion and judgment. At Charles University, German historical scholarship still held sway but often it collaborated with criticism. Joseph Janko lectured on Gothic vocalism and consonantism, Arnost Kraus on the *Minnesänger*, Otokar Fischer on the psychoanalytic interpretation of Heine, F. X. Salda on Symbolism, and Václav Tille on comparative folklore. From each Wellek learned, but from each he withheld total allegiance. Fascinated by the judgmental boldness of Friedrich Gundolf's *Shakespeare und der deutsche Geist* (1911) and *Goethe* (1916), Wellek in 1923 visited Heidelberg to hear Gundolf lecture; after calling on him, however, Wellek was repelled by Gundolf's adoring cult of Stefan George.

At Charles University, Wellek enjoyed the lectures on English literary history given by the highly regarded Czech scholar and teacher Vilém Mathesius (1882-1945). The noble and polite Mathesius, Wellek later wrote, was "the type

of the Czech scholar who grew up under Austria in the tradition of Czech Protestantism, with Masaryk as a model in mind, who devoted himself to the building of the nation between the wars." During Mathesius' sudden loss of sight, Wellek (who then cared only for Shakespeare and the Romantic and Victorian poets) read portions of *The Fairie Queene* to him and observed that often Mathesius' responses to Spenser went beyond the conventions of 19th-century positivistic philology. Mathesius, in fact, encouraged his students to free themselves from fanatic German factualism and to write Czech exposition in the simple, clear style of the English. Though Mathesius seemed to Wellek insufficiently concerned with the problem of evil and tragedy, with irrationality and the interior life, Mathesius instilled in him "a sane respect for order, tradition, common sense, lucidity... distrust of the merely new, the pretentious and opaque...a concern for genuine discovery for the frontiers of knowledge."

With his father's help Wellek in 1924 spent two months in England preparing his thesis on "Thomas Carlyle and Romanticism" and responding favorably to the Metaphysical Revival. The next year he and other Czech students, under the auspices of the British Union of students, visited Cambridge, Birmingham, Liverpool, Oxford, Bristol, and London. As an undergraduate Wellek began publishing his efforts in Czech books and periodicals. His first essay in Fischer's and Salda's review *Kritika*, took to task J. V. Sládek's Czech translation of *Romeo and Juliet*. Other early essays are on Byron and Shelley, early reviews on various studies in Czech, English, French, and German. Under Mathesius, Wellek completed his thesis on Carlyle: Wellek argues that Carlyle fought the Enlightenment with weapons from German Romanticism, but remained a Puritan. In June, 1926, at age twenty-three, Wellek received his D. Phil.

Supported by the Czech Ministry of Education, Wellek once more visited England, this time to prepare a monograph on Andrew Marvell in relation to Baroque and Latin poetry. But at Oxford, where he met Mario Praz, Wellek was surprised to learn that the French scholar Pierre Legouis was preparing a large book on Marvell. With recommendations from Oxford, Wellek applied to the Institute of International Education, and in the fall of 1927 he went to Princeton as a Procter Fellow of English. He spent a busy year in the

regular graduate seminars of Thomas M. Parrot, Robert K. Root, Charles G. Osgood, and Morris W. Croll. Unfortunately, Wellek's seminar assignments were much like those of his early years in Germanic philology. At the time Princeton offered no modern or American literature. Wellek, however, managed to read H. L. Mencken, Van Wyck Brooks, and the New Humanists.

Since there was no opening for him at Prague, Wellek remained in the United States and taught German the next year at Smith College. The following year he returned to Princeton to teach German. Having avoided at Prague the professors of positivistic philosophy, at Princeton he attended Ledger Wood's seminar on Hegel's *Logic*. Wellek's thesis on Carlyle had led him to Coleridge, and Coleridge led him to Kant and Schelling. During this period, Wellek decided that the topic of his second thesis (*Habilitation*) would be the influence of Kant on English thought. Wellek then voyaged home by way of England. At the British Museum he scrutinized Coleridge's MS. "Logic," amazed to see the fair and unfair use Coleridge made of Kant.

Back at Charles University by the fall of 1930, Wellek completed *Immanuel Kant in England: 1793-1838*. Though Mathesius had reservations about the subject of the *Habilitation*, he advised Wellek to enhance his chances of securing a professorship by writing a paper on the Middle English poem *The Pearl*. Wellek passed his *Docentura*, basing his inaugural lecture ("The Two Englands: Empiricism and Idealism in English Literature") on an entry in Coleridge's notebooks. Writes Wellek: "I developed the contrast between the two traditions with an unconcealed preference for the Platonic idealistic poetic tradition." Still, Mathesius selected Wellek his eventual successor as Professor of the History of English Literature.

From 1930 to 1935 Wellek lived in Prague. He became an active junior member of the famous Prague Linguistic Circle, translated Joseph Conrad's *Chance* and D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* into Czech, taught English as a *Privatdozent*, and wrote in Czech, English, and German for a variety of Czech journals. In 1932 Wellek married Olga Brodská, an elementary school teacher from Moravia. Wellek early surveyed the work of the Cambridge critics— I. A. Richards, F. R. Leavis, and William Empson —and contributed articles and reviews to *Slovo a slovesnost*, journal of the Prague Linguistic Circle. He further developed his considerable skill in textual analysis, formulation of theory, and

reasoned evaluation. Believing that history can be written only from a sense of direction, Wellek as early as 1932 sought in his paper on "Wordsworth's and Coleridge's Theories of Poetic Diction" for anticipations of the views of the Russian Formalists and the Czech Structuralists. Of great interest to Wellek at this time were the theories of Viktor Shklovsky, Roman Jakobson, Jan Mukarovsky, and Roman Ingarden.

Since prospects for a professorship at Prague seemed remote, Wellek from 1935 to 1939 was Lecturer in Czech Language and Literature at the school of Slavonic studies of the University of London. Sponsored there by the Czechoslovak Ministry of Education, Wellek also gave six public lectures a year on Czech culture. During these London years, he contributed his important "Theory of Literary History" to the sixth volume of *Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Prague* (1935). Wellek notes that this essay for the first time in English discusses Russian Formalism and Ingarden's phenomenology. Wellek argues against merely accumulating facts about literature, against reducing literature to historical information. He advocates concentrating on the actual works of art themselves, on bridging the gulf between content and form.

In Cambridge in the summer of 1936 Wellek for the first time met F. R. Leavis. Though Wellek's views in many areas coincided with those of the Cambridge group, his famous letter in *Scrutiny* in 1937 charged Leavis in his *Revaluation* (1936) with an inadequate appreciation of idealism as it descends from Plato, with underrating the coherence and comprehensibility of the Romantic view of the world. Leavis wrongly countercharged that Wellek was an abstract philosopher with an inadequate appreciation of sensitive, concrete criticism. As Bronislav Wellek before World War I had transmitted Czech culture to Austria, so René Wellek before World War II transmitted Czech culture to England. In London and environs, in speech and print, he sought help for his threatened homeland by acquainting the English with venerable Anglo-Czech relations, with Czech writers and values. Several of Wellek's thoughtful, factual accounts of Czech history and the Czech situation stem from this period.

After Hitler's troops marched into Prague in the spring of 1939, the Third Reich halted Wellek's salary. Thomas Parrott informed Norman Foerster of Wellek's plight. Foerster as Director of the school of Letters at the State University of Iowa invited Wellek to join the English Department as a lecturer

on a one-year appointment. Having ascertained the exact location of Iowa City on a map in the British Museum, Wellek and his wife gratefully sailed for America in June. Before the trip to Iowa, Wellek worked at Yale for six weeks on the manuscript of his *Rise of English Literary History*. The Welleks moved into a newly rented house in Iowa City on September 1, 1939—the day World War II broke out in Europe.

At Iowa, Wellek at first taught courses in the Humanities and the European novel. There he met several stimulating colleagues, among them Austin Warren. Reappointed, Wellek soon taught a seminar in German-English literary and intellectual relations. In the stormy debate in American Universities between scholars and critics (history versus values, facts versus ideas), Wellek naturally supported Foerster's Neo-Humanist reforms. Like England, America lacked theoretical awareness, its scholarship was antiquarian, its criticism impressionistic. To the collective volume *Literary Scholarship: Its Aims and Methods*, (1941) Wellek contributed a revised version of his "Theory of Literary History." That same year the University of North Carolina published his *Rise of English Literary History*. Wellek became an associate professor at Iowa and associate editor of *Philological Quarterly* (1941-46).

At meetings of the newly-founded English Institute in the early 1940s, Wellek met William K. Wimsatt, Cleanth Brooks, and Allen Tate. Robert Penn twice taught at Iowa as a visiting professor. Though Continental and American perceptions naturally differed, Wellek was impressed with these "New Critics." Sensing the limitations of New Humanism, Wellek and Warren decided to write *Theory of Literature*, a book stressing the nature, function, form, and contents of literature, as well as its relation to neighboring but distinct disciplines. The needed book would bring together Wellek's insights into slavish Formalism/structuralism and Warren's into American New Criticism. To expedite the collaboration, Wellek enlarged the scope of his reading in American scholarship while Warren read more European studies. Meanwhile, Wellek accepted Louis Wright's invitation to work as a Fellow at the Huntington Library during the summer of 1942—on what Wellek imagined would be the second installment of his *Rise of English Literary History* (since Thomas Warton to the present).

Though Wellek naturally lost touch with the Prague Circle, he intensified his theoretical interests. At the center of his convictions were the autonomy of the aesthetic experience, the human meaning of art, the necessity for responsible interpretation, the interdependence of theory and experience, and the interconnection of analysis, interpretation, and evaluation. In the spring of 1943 Wellek's son Ivan Alexander was born. From 1943-44, Wellek was Director of the Language and Area Program in Czech, his function to produce translators for the U. S. Army. Wellek was promoted to full professor in 1944, but his grinding stint as language director had retarded progress on *Theory of Literature*. With support from the Rockefeller Foundation, however, Wellek and Warren spent the bright post-war summer of 1945 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Enthusiastically, the Czech and the American wrote, exchanged, discussed, and revised chapters. Of Austin Warren as writer and teacher, Wellek observes: "Working with him was a course in style, in the art of exposition, in the clarity of formulation." In the fall they returned to Iowa, but Wellek, having learned that Mathesius had died shortly before the liberation, considered returning to Prague. Yale University, however, offered him a post, and Wellek became a naturalised American citizen in May, 1946. That same year Yale presented him with an honorary M. A. degree, and he joined the editorial board (1946-50) of the Modern Language Association.

Still working on *Theory of Literature*, Wellek in the fall of 1946 became Professor of Slavic and Comparative Literature at Yale. There was no chair, no program, no department then, but Wellek sensed that the time was growing ripe for expansion. Soon there would be 125 undergraduates in his Survey of the Russian Novel. Wellek rightly insisted that we cannot study a single literature in isolation. All literature is interdependent, particularly the literature descending from Greece and Rome. Ideas, forms, genres, themes, motifs, techniques, metrics, stock characters, and much more cross all language barriers. Professors of literature in whatever language or languages must recognize as an ideal the supernational history of Literature.

Warren visited Wellek in New Haven the next two summers, but the illness and death of Warren's wife necessitated that Wellek write chapters originally assigned to Warren. Though *Theory of Literature* bears a 1949 publication date, most of the book was written between 1945-47, and it incorporates

earlier papers, including Wellek's well-known chapter "The Mode of Existence of a Literary Work of Art," first published in the *Southern Review* in 1942. In the summer of 1947 Wellek lectured on literary theory at the University of Minnesota, and in the summer of 1948 he lectured on the history of criticism at Columbia University. He returned to Yale in the fall as chairman of his department. Meanwhile, Warren left Iowa for the University of Michigan.

Though not conceived as a textbook, *Theory of Literature* caught on in American graduate schools. In a short time, it became a *vade mecum*. Today it is an academic best seller, in twenty-two translations. Thanks to the fusion of the German-Slavic and Anglo-American critical traditions in *Theory of Literature*, students and professors of literature the world over have become cognizant of essential distinctions and with the cardinal idea that "a literary work of art is not a simple object but rather a highly complex organization of a stratified character with multiple meanings and relationships." To the first issue of *Comparative Literature*, on whose editorial board he was a member, Wellek contributed his long essay, "The Concept of Romanticism, in Literary History," his well-known refutation of Arthur O. Lovejoy's argument in 1924 against the unity of Western Romanticism. In the summer of 1949 Wellek joined John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, and Yvor Winters as a Fellow at the Kenyon School of Criticism. After the publication of *Theory of Literature*, Wellek put his greatest labors after teaching and administration into his projected five-volume (later projected six-volume) *History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950*. The books survey English, French, German, Italian, Russian, and American developments in criticism.

Limitations of space allow only brief mention of Wellek's major publications, activities, and honors since mid-century. He taught a weekly seminar in the Enlightenment at Harvard University in the spring of 1950, and in the summer he gave nine guest lectures in the Gauss Seminar in Literary Criticism at Princeton University. That year he also became a Fellow of Silliman College at Yale and a Fellow of the Indiana School of Letters. As a Guggenheim Fellow, he devoted 1951-52 to writing his *History of Criticism* in New Haven and afterward travelled briefly in Italy, Switzerland, and Germany. Still Chairman of the Slavic Department at Yale, he became Sterling Professor of Comparative Literature in 1952. He again became Visiting Professor at Harvard (1953-54) and again was elected to the editorial board (1953-54) of the Modern Language Association.

In 1955 Yale University Press published the first two volumes of his "monumental" *History of Modern Criticism—The Later Eighteenth Century* and

The Romantic Age. Praise was high and wide. For 1956-57 Wellek received his second Guggenheim Fellowship, which enabled him to work in New Haven without interruption and to visit Czechoslovakia. Lawrence College bestowed on Wellek the first of his twelve honorary doctorates. The next year Wellek accepted the Distinguished Service Award from the American Council of Learned Societies. For 1959-60 he was elected to the Executive Council of the Modern Language Association. He also was chosen Fulbright Research Scholar in Italy, mostly in Florence and Rome.

In 1960 Wellek received honorary degrees from Harvard and Oxford. In the fall he became Chairman of his outstanding Department of Comparative Literature at Yale. In 1961 he received an honorary degree from the University of Rome and was visiting professor at the University of Hawaii. During the next two years he was elected president of three large organisations: the International Association of Comparative Literature (1961-64), the American Association of Comparative Literature (1962-65), and the Czechoslovak society of Arts and Sciences in America (1962-66).

For his sixtieth birthday, the society presented him with the publication of his key Czech writings in English: *Essays in Czech Literature* (1963). Wellek was Visiting Summer Professor at the University of California in Berkeley in 1963, the year another collection—*Concepts of Criticism* was published, a work which defines problems of method and periodization, sets conceptual ideals, and measures results against literature itself. Grants from the Rockefeller and Bollingen Foundations allowed Wellek to take another leave from academic duties in 1963-64. The University of Maryland in 1964 awarded him an honorary degree. That year he also became vice-president of the Modern Language Association. A year later Princeton University Press published his third volume of essays, *Confrontations: Studies in the Intellectual and Literary Relations Between Germany, England, and the United States during the Nineteenth Century*, prompting Howard Mumford Jones to declare that "Wellek is the most erudite man in America....."

Boston College conferred an honorary degree in 1966, and Yale published the third and fourth volumes of his critical *History—The Age of Transition* and *The Later Nineteenth Century*. In 1966-67, on his third Guggenheim,

Wellek again visited Italy, mainly, Rome and Sicily. In the fall of 1967 Olga Wellek died. The next spring Wellek married a Russian emigré, Nonna Shaw, a most vital person and herself a professor of comparative literature. Columbia University honored Wellek with a degree in 1968, and that summer he was Fulbright Distinguished Lecturer in Germany.

The 1970s began for Wellek with degrees from the Universities of Montreal and Louvain and with the publication of his fourth collection, *Discriminations: Further Concepts of Criticism*. Wellek's own bibliographies in *Essays on Czech Literature*, *Concepts*, and *Discriminations* reveal his astonishing range. He often culls the substance of his books from his profusion of articles, surveys, and notes on European and American philosophy, aesthetics, history of ideas, literary theory, history, criticism, periods, developments, movements, style, methodology, pedagogy, critics, scholars, and personal reflections. The bibliographies refer us to Wellek's introductions to literary and critical texts and to his many reference-book entries on writers, national literatures, and, of course, concepts. His numerous reviews on American, English, German, Czech, Polish, Russian, French, and Italian criticism are crisp and balanced. His letters and comments in learned journals contribute to critical inquiry, to a sense of intellectual community.

In 1972, at age 69, Wellek retired from Yale. As director of the graduate program in comparative literature since 1947, he had directed over fifty Ph. D. dissertations, many now published. Wellek once wrote: "I trust the company who have come from the department have, whatever the variety of conviction they hold and interests they pursue, at least two things in common: devotion to scholarship and complete freedom to follow their own bent." Indebtedness to Wellek has been expressed in the form of anniversary volumes, special issues, dedications, acknowledgments, and ubiquitous footnotes. His membership in learned societies includes the British Academy, the Royal Netherlands Academy, the Italian National Academy, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Bavarian Academy, the Connecticut Academy, the American Philosophical Society, and the Linguistic Society of America. As a member of the editorial board of the splendid *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, his contribution — including nine penetrating articles — were substantial.

In the year of his retirement from Yale, the Universities of Michigan and Munich conferred degrees, and Wellek was chosen Senior Fellow of the National Endowment for the Humanities. At home and abroad, Wellek continued —and continues — to lecture in his rapid, Czech-accented clarity. In 1974 he was visiting Professor at Indiana University and that year in London he became president of the Modern Humanities Research Association. The following spring he returned to the University of Iowa as Visiting Professor, and in the summer the University of East Anglia accorded the irresistible critic of critics his twelfth honorary degree. In 1977 Wellek conducted a seminar at Cornell University as Senior Fellow of the Society of the Humanities. He continues to serve on several committees and editorial boards, including the editorial board of this journal. Recently he has read papers in Italy at conferences on De Sanctis and Vico. At the Yale celebration last fall, René Wellek defined as his central pursuits the completion of the fifth and sixth volumes of his *History of Criticism* and the revision of his early *Kant in England*. When asked how he likes retirement from academic duties at Yale, the sturdy, indefatigable, white-haired scholar quips, "I enjoy it but miss my vacations."

Professor of English
Colorado State University
Fort Collins : Colorado (U. S. A.)

RENE' WELLEK *

REMO CESERANI

In the following pages, *Theory of Literature*, Third ed. (New York : Harcourt Brace and Co., 1962), is quoted as *TL*; *Concepts of Criticism* (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1963), as *CC*; *Essays on Czech Literature* (The Hague : Mouton, 1963), as *ECL*.

This portrait— it should be said frankly from the very outset— will be very imprecise, and while it will try to delineate certain features of the figure, will leave others in the shade. This is mainly due to the fault of the writer who does not have the tools (not even the linguistic ones) to follow Wellek into the highly varied areas of his experience and knowledge. There is, however, another less manifest reason for the indeterminateness of this portrait. While reading Wellek's numerous writings and the many that speak about him (and also reading among the writings of Wellek some perfect "intellectual portraits" of philosophers and critics) the author of these pages has felt, more than on other occasions, the enormous difficulties that one encounters in tracing an intellectual portrait of a personage of our times who has lived at the center of a rich interlacing of cultural experiences, of relations with often very different environments, of ideological and emotional commitments, friendships, loyalties, polemics in the midst of profound tensions. And he has perceived that in order to fill the lacunae it is not enough to have approached his "subject," who have spoken with him, to have seen him living among his students and colleagues, to have felt cordial admiration and sympathy for him.

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(Nine pages on the Italian reaction to Wellek are left out.)

* Translated from the Italian paper, published in *Belfagor*, Vol. XXV. No. 5, 30 September 1969 PP. 547-78.

Let us try to briefly delineate an "intellectual history" of René Wellek. He was born in Vienna on August 22, 1903, of parents who were not Austrian. His father Bronislav came from Prague; though an official in the Austrian administration, he felt himself to be strongly tied to his original fatherland and culture (among other things, he wrote the first biography of the composer Smetana and translated poems of Vrchlicky and of Machar into German), and he returned to Prague with his family in 1918 after the fall of the Empire. If from the side of his father the motif of attachment to national culture (accompanied by liberal and humanitarian sentiments), typical of much cultured bourgeoisie of the nineteenth century, prevailed, from the side of his mother, the motif of cosmopolitanism, corresponding more than to ideological choice, to the experiences of many members of the European aristocratic classes, seemed to prevail. The daughter of a noble Prussian (of Polish origin) and of a Swiss lady of Schaffhausen, René Wellek's mother was born in Rome in 1881. In Wellek's family the Protestant religion predominated, in conformity with the sentiments of his mother and grandmother (a fact of noteworthy importance, the family being Czech.)

After finishing his studies in a Prague *gymnasium*, the young Wellek entered the Caroline University of Prague, registering in courses of English and Germanic philology. Prague was culturally very much alive as a city and the Caroline University included among its professors some figures of considerable importance. There was the great critic F. X. Salda, professor of Western literatures, who had done much to renovate the study of Czechoslovak literature, going through its tradition with a modern taste, rearranging many values and contributing to encourage the new literature of the early twentieth century.¹ The germanist Otokar Fischer was there, author of books on Kleist, Nietzsche and Heine (besides being a good translator, poet and man of the theater). He was very much interested in psychological problems (and also, among the first in Europe, in psychoanalysis) and was concerned with the reflections which the convolutions and ambiguities of the psyche have on literature even on the formal aspects of literature.² Vilém Mathesius was there, professor of English and a brilliant linguist, founder a few years later of the Linguistic Circle of Prague. The young Wellek, attracted by the most "modern" among his teachers, already from that

1. Wellek writes extensively on Salda in *ECL*, pp. 179-87. 2. Wellek has written on Fischer and his works in Czech periodicals and, on the occasion of his death, in a profile for the *Slavonic Review*, XVII (1938), pp. 215-18.

time felt an instinctive aversion for those studies of a positivistic nature, cultivated in the more retrogressive academic sectors of the University. He also showed marked interest for the technical, linguistic and stylistic study of the literary work (following the powerful, inspiring example of Mathesius) and for the study of philosophical problems (the Kantian and Herbartian tradition was prevalent in Prague, but Masaryk had introduced some of the themes of Anglo-Saxon philosophy). He made two trips to England for research and study in 1924 and 1925, and, in June 1926, he received his doctorate, writing a thesis on *Thomas Carlyle and Romanticism*. In the meantime, he had already begun to contribute to Czech literary journals, with articles and reviews on Shakespeare, Byron, Shelley, Vrchlicky, Heine, Tennyson, and on the *History of English Literature* by Legouis and Cazamian.

Wellek spent 1927 in England, doing research in the British Museum on what was to become his Habilitation thesis: *Immanuel Kant in England*. In September of 1927 he left for the United States to become a Procter Fellow at the Princeton Graduate School. His aim was to specialize in English literature and to return to Prague as a professor of that subject. He therefore followed the courses of Thomas M. Parrott, Charles G. Osgood, R. K. Root, and Morris W. Croll. This latter man (who concerned himself with stylistics and metrics, had written a study on the prose of *Euphues* and a little later was to publish a very fine study on the style of English Baroque prose) made a most vivid impression on the young Czech. Still in 1960 Wellek recalled, with appealing irony, Croll's efforts to teach him the so-called musical theory of English metrics (today generally declining in popularity both with critics and with linguists): "When I was a student at Princeton thirty years ago, one of my teachers, Morris Croll, who was, incidentally, one of the finest students of stylistics... (especially seventeenth century prose style), in this country taught me musical metrics. But I was always restive..."³ On the cultural atmosphere of the studious and secluded Princeton there blew the gentle breezes of the New Humanism, the literary movement of Babbitt and More, who had retired to live in his neoplatonic hermitage precisely at Princeton. An aristocratic vision of culture was typical of the New Humanism, together with a violent polemic against all of the literary movements of the nineteenth century, from romanticism, to

3. R. Wellek, "Closing Statement," in *Style in Language*, edited by Th. A. Sebeok, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1960, p. 414. Cf. also *TL*, pp. 224-26.

naturalism, determinism, and to scientific positivism. They had a classicistic—in Eliot's sense—and severely ethical conception of man and experienced a sense of revolt against the new industrial and democratic civilization, and a strong need to escape to a more serene and ordered world than the turbulent one in which they lived. The young Wellek, who had felt the touch of similar breezes in Prague (the Protestant and liberal tradition founded on a strictly ethical conception of education and self-control, but above all—in literature and in historical studies—a strong impatience with the pedantry and worship of facts typical of the positivists), showed some interest in the neohumanistic milieu.⁴

Since, for the moment, there was no opening for a professor of English at the University of Prague, Wellek decided to remain in the United States for two more years, as an instructor of German at Smith College (1928–29) and at Princeton (1929–30).⁵ Then in 1930, he returned to his homeland. He left behind himself a country rocked by a very grave social, economic and ideological crisis and a literary milieu that was stirred by deep polemics; the volume-manifesto of the neohumanists *Humanism and America*, edited by Norman Foerster and with essays by Foerster, Babbitt, More, T. S. Eliot, etc. came out precisely in the year 1930; and also the counter-volume, *The Critique of Humanism*, edited by C. Hartley Grattan, with essays by critics who adhered to Marxism or, at any rate, who were more interested in social problems, like Edmund Wilson and Lewis Mumford, appeared; and in that same year the volume of the “Southern Agrarians,” the first nucleus of the New Critics, *I'll Take My Stand*, was published.

After a new sojourn in London, Wellek returned to Prague in 1930, taking with him the manuscript of the book *Immanuel Kant in England* (published in 1931 by Princeton University Press), which permitted him to become Docent of the history of English literature at the University of Prague. During the preceding years, he had only sent to Prague journals a brief article on English

4. Later on, Wellek tried to indicate the bond that kept the various antipositivistic movements united (assigning to Croce a preeminent place, of chronological anteriority) in the Yale lecture of 1946: “The Revolt against Positivism in Recent European Literary Scholarship,” in *CC*, pp. 256–81 (to be completed for the American part with certain pages of the essay “American Literary Scholarship,” in *CC*, particularly pp. 304–305. in which Wellek advances certain criticisms of the New Humanism).

5. “Comparative Literature Today,” in *Comparative Literature*, XVII (1965), p. 326.

universities and another, also brief, on the differences between American and Czechoslovak universities. But now, he came back into full touch with the culture of his own country. At the University, as a teacher of English, he presided over the instruction of that language; he published many articles on English and American literature in reviews and newspapers (on the medieval poem *The Pearl*, on the poetic theories of Wordsworth and Coleridge, on Blake, Oscar Wilde, Yeats, T. S. Eliot, on Joyce and on many contemporary novels; he also translated into Czech novels of Conrad and D. H. Lawrence. But above all, and this was his most important intellectual adventure, he came into direct contact with the Linguistic Circle of Prague, founded by Mathesius in 1926, which was in full bloom at that time. Roman Jakobson had brought the ideas of the Russian formalists to Prague; Jan Mukarovsky had amply developed them in the domain of literary theory, conceived by him to be a part of the general theory of signs (semiotics), and had also faced the problem of the relations between literature and society and of literary history as being a working area which should be kept strictly distinct from criticism. Wellek followed all of those discussions with interest but greeted Mukarovsky's theories with some reservations,⁶ and when he contributed to the *Travaux du Cercle linguistique de Prague* (VI [1936], pp. 173-91) an essay dedicated precisely to the problem of literary history ("The Theory of Literary History") he tried to take a median position between the extreme demands of the formalists and the historiographical ideas of the historical tradition.

In 1935, after spending five years in Prague, Wellek moved to London, as a lecturer of Czech language and literature at the School of Slavonic Studies of the University of London. His studies on Czech literature or on the relations between Czech and English literature mainly date back to this period. His conference at the School on February 25, 1936, "The Cultural Situation in Czechoslovakia" (in *Slavonic Review*, XIV [1935-36], pp. 622-38), is important in offering an overall view of the culture of his country (the organization of schools, the formation of cultural *élites*, the diffusion of mass culture, etc.). He

6. An echo of these perplexities in *ECL*, p. 190; *TL*, pp. 200 and 339; *CC*, pp. 48-49, 279-80. As is known, Mukarovsky later embraced Marxism (eliciting harsh comments from Wellek; Cf. *ECL*, pp. 195-97). On the entire question of the Prague Circle Wellek has written a long article, "The Literary Theory and Aesthetics of the Prague School," in *Michigan Slavic Contributions* (ed. L. Matejka), Ann Arbor, 1969, recently published.

intended to remain in London for a few years to conduct research for his book *The Rise of English Literary History*, which was in preparation (a note on the subject: from a theoretical discussion on the possibility of writing a literary history, Wellek passes to an examination of the literary histories already written, beginning with seventeenth century England). Wellek's contacts with Prague periodicals continued to be very frequent, and in addition to the article on the *Travaux* he published essays and reviews, generally on English topics, in various journals of his city.

In England, Cambridge was the most lively center of literary discussions. I. A. Richards (*Principles of Literary Criticism*, 1924; *Coleridge on Imagination*, 1934) had already left Cambridge, however, and after a series of trips and a sojourn in China, he was about to establish himself in the other Cambridge, across the Atlantic. His young disciple, William Empson (*Seven Types of Ambiguity*, 1930; *Some Versions of Pastoral*, 1935) had also fallen victim to the *mal d' Orient*, and desired a change of air. Both, at any rate, had left profound marks on the Cambridge literary scene. And both, because of the importance they attributed to poetic language and to verbal analysis, had the power of attracting the interest of Wellek, who was fresh from the linguistic experiences of Prague. However, he could accept neither the experimental psychology of Richards nor the enthusiasm for Marxism and psychoanalysis which permeated Empson's second book. Moreover, there were F. R. Leavis (*New Bearings in English Poetry*, 1932; *Revaluation*, 1936) and the whole group gathered around the review *Scrutiny*, founded by Leavis in 1932. The new poetic taste elaborated by Eliot and the technique of verbal analysis developed by Richards were combined in the criticism of Leavis and gave excellent results, allaying themselves with a strong ethical sense of Arnoldian provenience.

Wellek referred to the work of Richards, Empson, and Leavis (evidently the most interesting critics in the English panorama for him) in an article for the review of the Prague Linguistic Circle, *Slovo a Slovesnost*, III [1937], pp. 108-21. But he also had more direct contacts with Leavis. When *Revaluation* was published, he wrote a brief article entitled "Literary Criticism and Philosophy," which appeared in *Scrutiny* together with Leavis' answer (cf. *Scrutiny*, V [1937], pp. 375-83). While acknowledging Leavis' many merits, Wellek accused him of using terms without rigorously defining them and of expressing

unsubstantiated judgments. Leavis answered (Cf. now *The Common Pursuit*, London, Penguin Books, 1966, pp. 211-22) making a distinction between criticism and philosophy. He evidently intuited the presence of a *fahrender Scholast*, the subtle logician, in the young Czech, and he proclaimed: "Dr. Wellek is a philosopher." He added that "words in poetry invite us, not to 'think about' and judge, but to 'feel into' them and 'become'—to realize a complex experience that is given in the words." In spite of this polemical exchange, Wellek was later invited to contribute to *Scrutiny* with some reviews. One must not forget, however, that among the English critics who attracted Wellek's attention, next to those of Cambridge, there was the Oxford critic F. W. Bateson, author in 1934 of an important book, *English Poetry and the English Language*. Bateson's conception of a literary history marked by linguistic rather than social changes, and his reevaluation of Baroque English poetry must have appeared to Wellek in some respects closer (even if independent) to some of the experiences of the Russian and Czech critics.

The years of sojourn in England were also those in which Wellek felt himself to be most directly involved in political life. While Hitler fanned the flames on the question of the Sudeten, and German propaganda aired dusty nationalistic and racial myths, Wellek wrote an article for the journal *German Life and Letters*, II (October 1937), pp. 14-24, on "German and Czechs in Bohemia" now in *ECL*, pp. 71-80; cf. also the review to K. Bittner, "Deutsche und Tschechen," in *Slavonic Review* XVI [1937-38], pp. 481-84), in which he defended the peaceful and liberal policy of his country toward its racial minorities. There are other studies connected with the political atmosphere, of a literary though unusual, character for Wellek, such as the extensive one on "Bohemia in English Literature" (1937, now in *ECL*, pp. 81-147) in which he patiently reconstructs the image of Bohemia entertained by the English through the centuries.

The Munich episode (September 1938) was a serious blow for Wellek. Chamberlain's concession filled him with indignation. The myth of Masaryk had been brutally broken into pieces. "I could not think of returning to Prague," he says, "nor of staying in England after the Munich capitulation. In June of 1939, I emigrated permanently to the United States."

In America Wellek established himself, first as a lecturer and then as professor of English, at the University of Iowa, where Norman Foerster, the

neohumanist scholar, was the director of the School of Letters. Among his colleagues, there was a congenial friend, Austin Warren. A scholar of English and American literature, author of several fine essays (afterwards gathered in the volume *Rage for Order*, 1948), Warren had been one of Babbitt's students and had met More at Princeton, but had then moved to a position that was very close to T. S. Eliot's and to that of the New Critics (very much on the rise in those years and already established in some important universities). One of the advantages of being at the University of Iowa was that of having at one's disposal a good journal, the *Philological Quarterly*, which was published there; Wellek wrote many articles and reviews for it. The war was shaking the world and deeply upsetting consciences. But the School of Letters of the University of Iowa was an oasis of peace and study, "a real intellectual community."⁷ As Wellek recounts:

The conflict between literary history and criticism was very acute and even bitter at Iowa. I still remember vividly how I and Austin Warren met a highly respected member of the department, a good historical scholar, and tried to suggest to him that, in writing about Milton and the English essay in the seventeenth century, he had also written some criticism. He turned red in his face and told us that it was the worst insult any body ever had given him. I was, by conviction and in the academic constellation of the place and time, classed as a critic and I collaborated, under Norman Foerster's editorship, in a volume, *Literary Scholarship*, published in 1941 by the University of North Carolina Press,.....Mr. Warren (author of the chapter on "Literary Criticism") and myself were somewhat dissatisfied with the volume. We felt that we sailed under false colors. We could not endorse the neo-humanistic creed of the editor, though we shared most of his objections to current academic practices and enjoyed teaching the humanities courses which he devised. Homer, the Bible, Greek tragedy, Shakespeare, and Milton were taught to freshmen and sophomores in compulsory courses long before the present vogue of far-ranging world literature courses. I myself taught a course in the European novel, which started with Stendhal and Balzac and reached Proust and Mann via Dostoevsky and Tolstoy.....

7. Austin Warren, Preface to *Rage for Order*, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

Theory of Literature was thus born as an attempt to reach a synthesis between the literary conceptions that Wellek had brought with him from Europe and the American ones elaborated in the circles of the New Critics, of which Austin Warren acted as bearer. Notwithstanding common aims, the differences between the two existed and were perceptible.⁸ They did not try to conceal them and specified in the preface which of the two was principally responsible for the individual chapters. But it is clear that of the two, Wellek held the predominant position, as is also indicated by the order in which the two names appear on the title page; one might infer that the conceptual structure, the very ordering of the chapters (with the distinction between "extrinsic methods" and "intrinsic study" of literature that caused so many discussions), were his. The last chapter of the book (already published separately in 1947), on "The Study of Literature in the Graduate School," contained an analysis of the serious defects in the programs and methods of study of literature in the United States and a number of suggestions for reform. It is a sign not only of the success of the book, but also of its profound harmony with the preoccupations and conceptions that were victoriously spreading in America, that in the second edition (1956) the authors judged that they could now omit it, "partly because some of the reforms suggested there have been accomplished in many places."⁹

In the summer of 1946, Wellek moved from the University of Iowa to the far more prestigious Yale University. From 1947 to 1959 he was Chairman of the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, but also, at the same time, director of the comparative literature program. In 1952, he was nominated Sterling Professor of Comparative Literature; in 1960 he became chairman of the

8. The third chapter, written by Warren, has a strong "Eliotic" tone, which seems to distinguish it from the rest of the book. And it is not by chance that the eighth chapter, on the relationships between psychology and literature, was written by Warren (although it may contain much information obtained, almost certainly, by Wellek). To have proof of the differences between the two critics, it is necessary only to compare two of their essays on the same subject: R. Wellek, "The Criticism of T. S. Eliot," in *Sewanee Review*, LXXIV [1956], pp. 398-443; A. Warren, "Eliot's Literary Criticism," in *Sewanee Review*, LXXIV [1966], pp. 272-92; that of Wellek is an attempt to systematize Eliot's ideas and to carefully evaluate his work as a critic; Warren's article is a fragmentary discussion (also written in different moments between 1940 and 1966), fully conformable to the thought of its author ("I can no longer quote, from his criticism, without dubiety whether I am paraphrasing him or expressing my own views.") with the explicit denial of any systematization.

Department of Comparative Literature, newly founded as an independent unit, and this is the position he still holds today. To describe his activity at Yale, still extremely intense, would be a long undertaking. It is enough to mention Wellek's activity as a professor of research, the many comparative literature theses prepared under his direction, his formation and selection of many young scholars, the always increasing influence exercised on the organisation of studies at Yale and other universities, the ever more frequent visits to various places in the United States and Europe for courses, conferences, and congresses, the work of direction and consultation engaged in for many authoritative periodicals (*Comparative Literature*, *Philological Quarterly*, *PMLA*, *Studies in English Literature*, *The Slavic Review*, etc.), the part he had in the organisation of the "American Comparative Literature Association" (of which Wellek served as President from 1961 to 1964). The general educational climate, in the meantime, had decidedly changed; many of the ideals propounded by Wellek had begun to be realized (if anything, there were new and different dangers): "In my own experience of the American academic scene, the contrast between the Princeton of 1927-28, where even eminent scholars seemed hardly aware of the issues of criticism, and Yale of 1962, where criticism and its problems are our daily bread and tribulation, is striking" ("Philosophy and Postwar American Criticism," in *CC*, p. 317).

During this whole period, the best energies of Wellek as a scholar were dedicated to the composition of his imposing *History of Modern Criticism*, which has now reached the completion of the fourth of the five or six contemplated volumes. Again there occurs a shift of interest from "theory" to "history". The plan of the *History* is ambitious (the tracing of the history of criticism between 1750 and 1950, in Germany, France, England, Italy, Russia, the United States and Spanish-speaking countries) and is carried forward with great energy.

The evolution of Wellek's intellectual history seems to obey the influence of two contrasting forces, that of attachment to his own roots (Czechoslovakia) and that of attraction toward cultural traditions of other countries (cosmopolitanism). Let us attempt to follow the two trails.

Czechoslovakia for Wellek is first of all a place of private memories, life experienced, friendships, etc. And I will not attempt to penetrate into this

area. But Czechoslovakia is also something more than a private experience. Prague, his former university, the cultural circles and reviews, are the places and symbols of a corner of Europe which many Europeans in the years between 1918 and 1928 looked upon with admiration. It was a republic rebuilt after centuries of dismemberment and enslavement, a peasant country in the process of strong industrial development, an example of a bourgeois and social-democratic state in the midst of countries that had fallen or were about to fall under the rule of fascist dictatorships, a tradition of liberalism, a crossroad of cultures, a sort of second European center of the artistic avant-gardes, after Paris: and seated on the chair of the Presidency of the Republic, a good father for all, a philosopher like the one in the *Republic* of Plato. It was easy to make it into a myth, a myth which had the benevolent face of Masaryk.

It is interesting to read Wellek's essay on Masaryk ("Masaryk's Philosophy", in *Ethics*, 55 [1945], pp. 298-304, now in *ECL*, pp. 62-70), an essay, it should be noted, that was written in 1945, that is during a moment in which the history of Czechoslovakia was about to move forward again after the terrible wounds sustained, but in a situation now very different, from which Wellek was not merely physically removed. Having decided to stay in America (he obtained American citizenship the following year), in that moment of laceration, Wellek tried to evoke the youthful myth once again. (But see also the review of "T. G. Masaryk" by Zdenek Nejedly, in *Slavonic Review*, 14 [1935-36], pp. 456-62). The essay presents itself as an "objective" profile that wishes to describe with rigor the positive and negative aspects of the figure under examination. But one feels it to be pervaded by an unusual concurrence and sympathy. In the absence of more direct expositions—written in the first person—of Wellek's philosophical-political ideology, one is tempted to read the essay as an exposition of *his* ideology, to be conjectured in filigree beneath the exposition of Masaryk's ideology. Given the differences (which are both many and profound) one is still left with the feeling that there exists a basic common orientation between Masaryk and Wellek in terms of their conception of man and of society, an almost instinctive agreement.

In Masaryk's philosophy, in his peculiar mixture of empiricism and moral rigor, good sense and flexibility, paternalistic sympathy for the popular

masses and respect for elitist traditions, one may perceive many of the elements animating Wellek's secret loyalties and his basic choices. With regard to Masaryk, for example, he says that for him philosophy was "a fight against spiritual, moral, and political anarchy", (*ECL*, p. 64). In the field of the historical and literary sciences how can we avoid remembering the frequent occasions in which Wellek has taken a stand against the "anarchical" excesses of "relativism", against the "tower of Babel" of the many methodological proposals? He has often acknowledged that literary judgments are invariably "relative", conditioned by historical and subjective reasons, but he has always maintained with energy that a scale of values exists, and that permanent aesthetic truths exist. The most insidious danger for literary criticism has often appeared to him to be that of relativism: "a general anarchy or rather a levelling of all values must be the result." (*TL*, p. 42)

Wellek presents the religious conception of Masaryk (a religion, it must be understood, which is substantially ethical and humanitarian, not identifiable with formally instituted religions even if nearer to the Protestant religion than to the Catholic) in the following terms :

The ethical starting-point of his religion is obvious: the difference between right and wrong was something so absolutely clear and self-evident to him, something so immutable, independent of utilitarian considerations and inexplicable on such grounds, that he was driven to look for a sheet-anchor in religion. The concept of God and immortality is for him a guaranty of this eternal difference between right and wrong. (*ECL*, p. 64)

Having pointed out the necessary distinctions between philosophy and literary studies, one is tempted to compare the convictions, of Masaryk described above with a few statements made by Wellek, in polemic with the "relativism" of certain historicists such as Auerbach :

Actually the case of knowledge and even of historical knowledge is not that desperate. There are universal propositions in logic and mathematics such as two plus two equal four, there are universally valid ethical precepts, such, for instance, as that which condemns the

massacre of innocent people, and there are many neutral true propositions concerning history and human affairs. There is a difference between the psychology of the investigator, his presumed bias, ideology, perspective and the logical structure of his propositions. The genesis of a theory does not necessarily invalidate its truth. Men can correct their biases, criticize their presuppositions, rise above their temporal and local limitations, aim at objectivity, arrive at some knowledge and truth. The world may be dark and mysterious, but it is surely not completely unintelligible.....

..... Relativism in the sense of a denial of all objectivity is refuted by many arguments : by the parallel to ethics and science, by recognition that there are aesthetic as well as ethical imperatives and scientific truths. Our whole society is based on the assumption that we know what is just, and our science on the assumption that we know what is true. Our teaching of literature is actually also based on aesthetic imperatives, even if we feel less definitely bound by them and seem much more hesitant to bring these assumptions out into the open. ("Literary Theory, Criticism and History," in *CC*, pp. 14 and 17)

Wellek presents Masaryk's struggle as being one that occurs on two fronts, on the one hand against a mythological and theological vision of the world, and on the other hand against an indiscriminate exaltation of the social sciences :

Masaryk admits that science and the scientific view is a necessity both for a truthful mind and as a useful tool, but he does not admit its solution of all philosophical problems. He objects to naturalism because it undermines human personality, makes man a mere product of natural processes, explains consciousness and human ideals as merely biological functions, denies the validity of moral laws and norms, deprives man of his responsibility, and paralyzes his action by a false belief in fatalism. Masaryk then fights on two fronts : against both mythical religion and naturalistic science. (*ECL*, p. 66)

In the light of this interpretation, one is reminded of the many analogous statements by Wellek, typically "third force," and one thinks of *Theory of Literature*, built entirely on the hypothesis of a struggle on two fronts. When, furthermore, we read of Masaryk's rejection of Marxism, of his conviction, that "ideas are just

as influential as economics and are by no means dependent on them," of his attachment to the cultural tradition of his people, of his predilection, among the cultural traditions of other peoples, for the Anglo-Saxon, we perceive a very strong analogy with certain of the presuppositions of Wellek's cultural work.

There is a point on which Wellek differs distinctly from Masaryk, nevertheless, and it is the one concerning the autonomy of art. According to Wellek, Masaryk too often reduces literature to the status of a vehicle for and a means of propagating ideas and assigns pedagogical functions to it. He instead feels the need to safeguard the autonomy and specificity of the literary work, in conformity with the tendencies of the formalists (trying, however, not to espouse their extreme theses). In the greater part of his writings and critical disquisitions, which in fact are almost all concerned with the literary work, we feel that the humanitarian philosophy of Masaryk has faded into the background, has become the presupposition for his own private actions and loyalties (has become, in Marxian terms, "ideology"); whereas in the forefront we find literature, and theory of literature, and literary criticism, and literary history, and the history of criticism: this is the "profession" publicly chosen (in Marxist terms, the "piece" of work assigned to the scholar within the general "division of labor.")

In this regard, two more of Wellek's essays are very indicative, a more general one on "The Two Traditions of Czech Literature" (1943, now in *ECL*, pp. 17-31), the other, more detailed and closer to directly lived experiences, on "Twenty Years of Czech Literature: 1918-1938" (1938; now in *ECL*, pp. 32-45.) The "two traditions" of Czech literature are the pragmatic and rationalistic one on the one hand, and the poetic and aesthetic one, on the other. Masaryk, precisely in his endeavor to "syssematize" both literary history and the history of the whole of Czechoslovak civilization (in certain aspects similar to that of De Sanctis) had given preference to one of the two traditions, exalting the Hussite period, considering the sect of the "Bohemian Brethren" to be the most beautiful historical realization of humanitarian ideals, interpreting the Revival at the beginning of the nineteenth century as a direct continuation of the Reformation. Wellek recognizes the importance of Masaryk's reconstruction but he knows that many of the studies written in the meantime have corrected Masaryk's scheme and have revaluated the other tradition, the "poetic" one, which touched points of high realization in the fourteenth century, in the flowering of the

Baroque in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in the poetry of Macha and in that of symbolists such as Brezina. The two traditions, Wellek observes, have a history which is not aligned with civil history: "the times of artistic creativeness do not coincide or coincide only rarely with times of intellectual advance and political good fortune." (*ECL*, p. 30) The consequences of the dichotomy are openly recognized: "Both traditions have achieved much, though there is little doubt that the empirical, ethical lineage has done more for the nation and humanity in terms of practical benefits. But we as literary critics as lovers of poetry, cannot forget the other tradition: the voice of literature as fine art, the voice of poetry, and imagination." (*ECL*, pp. 30-31)

In the other essay, which reviews the story of Czech literature between 1918 and 1938, the necessity of keeping the two levels and the two traditions distinct is confirmed and the exigencies of literature as art are forcefully made to prevail. The background social panorama traced by Wellek, above all for the first years of the Republic, is rich in positive data: the whole of society was pervaded by a new enthusiasm, by a faith in life and in progress, and there was a great diffusion of culture. However the reservations on the political movements, which found many followers among the young Czechs of the time, were not lacking: Wellek speaks of "naiveté" and "youthfulness" and says with regard to the "proletarian poets" that "their communism was rather an anticipation of a curiously idyllic earthly paradise than anything typically Russian." (*ECL*, p. 38) In any case, examining the poetic results of the period, Wellek never renounces the autonomy of critical judgements. His judgement concerning the "proletarian poets" is on the whole negative, even though he recognizes their contribution to the simplification and modernization of language, the utility of their rediscovery of certain "popular" genres, the fine quility of Wolker's poetry. Very severe, surprisingly, and full of reservations is instead his judgement on the *Svejk* of Hasek: "The book is not much of a work of art, as it is full of low humor and cheap propaganda; but the type of the foolish, smiling, cowardly Czech Sancho Panja, who goes unscathed through the military machine of the Empire is difficult to forget, however unheroic and uninspiring he may be." (*ECL*, p. 41) One perceives a certain severity also in his judgement on the "poetism" movement, and this is still more surprising. Just think of what the "poetism" of Prague was,⁹ that extraordi-

9. Cf. *Poetismus*, edited by K. Chvatik and Z. Perat, Odeon, 1960.

nary and enthusiastic crucible of Apollinairian and futurist suggestions and of exaltation for the Russian revolution, of celebration of the imagination as a revolutionary instrument; one might direct one's thought to the short circuit instituted between poetical experiments and the linguistic research of the theorists of the Circle, to the dense network of interchange between the arts, to the great season of the theatre, of the cinema, of the marionettes, of the Czechoslovak clowns, to the great taste for the festive and popular life. And read instead what Wellek writes on the poetry of Nezval, the "protagonist," the "extraordinary virtuoso in poetical fireworks": "a painter of little colourful pictures, an inventor of fantastic rhymes, illogical associations, grotesque fancies, whole topsyturvy worlds... The playful charm of Nezval's talent should not, however, conceal a certain vulgarity and bad taste which is most apparent in his fantastic novels. "Poetism" in Czechoslovakia seems less the refinement of an over-subtle society than the plaything for rather crude young men without intellectual ideas or traditions." (*ECL*, p. 39) This judgment reveals a taste in Wellek that one might be tempted to define as "Eliotic" in its tendency to measure every linguistic and poetic experimentation according to a fundamentally neoclassical or at any rate intellectualistic yardstick. Such a taste carries Wellek to reject the results of that epoch which, even with all of its limits, was perhaps the only time in the literary history of his country in which the "two traditions," in paradoxical ways, but with vigorous enthusiasm, tried to fuse. And I would say that from such an enunciation of taste there transpires an element which clearly separates Wellek from the most coherent of the formalists and structuralists of the Prague Circle. What he genuinely accepts from the teaching of such men as Mukarovsky is the invitation to a careful study of literary techniques and to the construction of a "theory of literature." After 1948, in any case, the break with the literary world of Prague is complete for Wellek. He continues to follow the studies of the critics of his country from afar, but the points of contact, which every once in a while reappear, are substantially less numerous than the points of divergence.¹⁰ The only thing that is left him, melancholically, is the "Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences in America" (of which Wellek was President from 1962 to 1966).

Let us try then to follow the other trait : Wellek and the United States. One is immediately reminded of the phenomenon of the emigration of so many European intellectuals to America in the 30's and 40's, and one thinks of

Jakobson and Cassirer, Borgese and Castro, Spitzer and Auerbach, and of the many philosophers, artists, musicians from Germany, Spain and from other countries. The affinities are there; but Wellek's case is different. Also in him one perceives some of the characteristics common to many of those emigrants: that of remaining European despite everything, the feeling of being rootless and errant, with ideas to defend but also to diffuse, and thus suspicious of and at the same time curious about their new environment: a whole story which has yet to be written. But in Wellek the reactions were less dramatic, without abrupt upheavals. The greater part of those men, with some exceptions, remained isolated in America, they were "different." (The books of Auerbach and Spitzer, for example, circulated widely only after their death.) Wellek, instead, (also because he was a professor of English literature and had studied at Princeton and in England) inserted himself more easily into and slowly became an integral part of his new environment, often assuming important directive functions. One must, indeed, recognize his merit in having often helped to disseminate the work of the "others," in having contributed to make them known, both by quoting them often in his own works and by reviewing their books in journals.¹¹ Moreover he speaks not only about the better known figures, but also about some of the more isolated ones, such as the Pole, Manfred Kridl, a follower of Ingarden and of the Russian formalists, or the German,

10. Cf. "Recent Czech Literary History and Criticism" (1962), in *ECL*, pp. 194-205, to which one must add the more benevolent "New Czech Books on Literary History and Theory," in *Slavic Review*, XXVI (1967), pp. 295-301. In both these studies Wellek's anti-communism appears very strongly. This phrase, in regard to a book on Capek by Alexander Matuska, is typical: "It seems to me to be patently absurd to speak of the 'opaqueness of human relations in capitalist society' (p. 197) or of the standardized, leveled face of men such as it developed under the pressure of bourgeois civilization" (p. 241), as if the world behind the curtain were less standardized and leveled than that of the West and as if human relations were more open where people look over their shoulder and lower their voices when speaking within earshot of a stranger." (New Czech Books, p. 298) This "retaliatory" reasoning is typical of that period of the cold war, but the denunciation of the capitalistic and bourgeois society remains valid despite the failures of the eastern European countries; and for the person who lives in the United States there is no need to institute comparisons.

11. On Cassirer in *Rocky Mountain Review*, IX (1945), pp. 194-96; on Auerbach in *Kenyon Review*, XVI (1954), pp. 299-307 (Italian translation by P. Longanesi, in *Il Verri* II [1957] pp. 13-24), and in *Comparative Literature*, X [1958], pp. 93-94; on Spitzer in *Comparative Literature*, XII (1960), pp. 310-34 (Italian translation by M. L. Spaziani, in *Convivium*, XXXIII [1965], pp. 238-51.)

Martin Schutze, author of a book strongly denouncing positivistic methods in literary scholarship, which appeared in 1933 and was republished posthumously in 1962 with a preface by Wellek: *Academic Illusions* (Hamden, Conn., Archon Books, 1962).

Besides the tendency toward integration into his new environment, however, there remains in Wellek the tenacious preservation of his original characteristics. What is certain is the fact that he received his philosophical, historico-cultural and literary bases in his native homeland and thus took an already organically structured outlook with him to America. For this very reason his position became unique and exceptional, that of the mediator between two different cultures, European and American, that of the "builder of bridges."

To a person who observes him as he lives through one of his full days he may appear, for example, as follows (we are however on the level of the anecdote, of the light profile etched with much affection and a touch of malice). "To his colleagues he seems to live completely in the region of books and ideas. His reading is wide in all languages... Yet he is more likely to have read the last novel of a visiting British lecturer than most other literary professors. He prefers conversation to all other recreation." The anonymous author of this "vignette" depicts Wellek while, engrossed in deep conversation, he entertains a visitor from Italy or another country at lunch, or as he attends to his voluminous correspondence, or when he gives proof of an "astounding" knowledge of the news of the academic world on an extremely wide front. According to this observer, Wellek's world rests on two poles: books and people. He also puts into relief Wellek's "interest in beginning scholars and their writings," proof of a cordiality of character and of a sincere humanistic ideal.¹²

These reasons and preferences which one might think of as being almost private concerns are not, however, really different from those concerns which

12. Cf. "Vignette" LXIX in *PMLA*, LXXVII (June, 1962), p. i; a successive "Vignette" LXXXVI *Ibid.*, LXXX (March 1965), p. 46, added some retouches to the picture: "[Some of his friends]—point out that [Wellek's] enthusiasm for literature is matched by a deep concern for both European and American politics and a serious fondness for both music and painting."

on the level of literary theory and of cultural affairs have inspired and have been the mainstays of Wellek's battle in favor of comparative literature and, indeed, of general literature. This is a battle which he had continued and still continues to wage, which has had its evident victories (the foundation of departments of comparative literature in many American Universities, organised on the bases suggested by Wellek), but which has been accompanied, also in recent years, by many polemics. "Literature is one, as art and humanity are one; and in this conception lies the future of historical literary studies;" thus wrote Wellek in *Theory* (TL, p. 50). On the other hand, he does not ignore the historical reality of national literatures; general and universal literature is more than anything else an aspiration pertaining to the future. As far as education and scholarship are concerned however, an internationalism—the broadest possible—of perspectives must be decidedly encouraged from the present moment, it is a real necessity.

The history of themes and forms, devices and genres, is obviously an international history... Even the history of metrics, though closely bound up with the individual linguistic systems, is international. Furthermore, the great literary movements and styles of modern Europe (the Renaissance, the Baroque, Neo-Classicism, Romanticism, Realism, Symbolism) far exceed the boundaries of one nation, even though there are significant national differences between the workings out of these styles. (TL, p. 51)

Thus the history of ideas, the history of critical conceptions, the history of literary movements, the history of styles, the history of forms, the history of themes, the history of metrics: all should have an international perspective. "What is needed in the whole area of literary studies [is] a thoroughly informed discussion of methodological problems which would ignore artificial political and linguistic barriers and bring new viewpoints and methods within the sight of the student." (review of S. Skard, "Color in Literature," in *American Literature*, XVIII [1947], pp. 342-43). And speaking of the *Autobiography* of Vico (in *Philological Quarterly* XXIV [1945], pp. 166-68) and of the difficulty in establishing the real extent of the diffusion of his thought in eighteenth century Europe, he writes: "A dictionary of unit-ideas on historical principles, comparable to the *OED*, with dated quotations, may be a dream for a distant future..." (but evidently for him a desire and a necessity). And on

another occasion, reviewing an anthology of Korean poetry compiled by Peter H. Lee (in *Comparative Literature*, XII [1960], pp. 376-77), he speaks of "that dreamed of ultimate, general poetics and history of poetry, in which all nations would be represented," and, even in the far removed Korean poetry, he finds "most instructive material for a study of poetic themes and forms."

Parallel to this persistent defense of a general literature, based on a common minimum denominator of "norms" and also of "values," is the assiduous condemnation of the old way of studying comparative literature, the one practiced for example, by the group of French scholars gathered around the *Revue de littérature comparée*. Very severe criticisms of these "accountants" of literary study (which keep the "ledgers" of influences, exchanges, trips, sources, etc.) were first voiced by Wellek in 1952, in a brief article, "The Concept of Comparative Literature," which appeared in *The Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, II (1952), pp. 1-5, then, at greater length, on the occasion of the second congress of the International Association of Comparative Literature at Chapel Hill in September 1958, with a talk entitled "The Crisis of Comparative Literature" (now in *CC*, pp. 256-95). Many polemics followed,¹³ above all from the side of French comparatists and those of the socialist world (the long battle in the Eastern countries, conducted sometimes with good reasons, but often with dogmatic obtuseness against "bourgeois cosmopolitanism" and in favor of a literature anchored to concrete national historical reasons, is well known). Lastly, Wellek's answer followed: "Comparative Literature Today" (in *Comparative Literature*, XVII [1965], pp. 325-37).

In this latter writing, many of the basic motivating reasons at the bottom of Wellek's work come once again to the surface: as, for example, the defense of

13. Cf. M. Bataillon, "Nouvelle jeunesse de la philologie à Chapel Hill," in *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, XXXV (1961), 290-98; *La littérature comparée en Europe Orientale* edited by I. Soter, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiado, 1963 (particularly the contributions of I. G. Neupokoeva, Maria Janion, L. Nyiro and René Etiemble: the latter with some effective argumentation, advanced from a Marxist point of view, against the "superficial" concept of bourgeois cosmopolitanism); L. Nyiro, "Problèmes de la littérature comparée et Théorie de la littérature," in *Littérature hongroise-Littérature Européenne*, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiado, 1964, pp. 505-24 (who, despite the criticisms is very close to Wellek). But cf. also the paper, "The Name and Nature of Comparative literature," in *Comparatists at Work*, W. Stephen G. Nichol and Richard B. Vowles (Waltham, Mass., 1968), 3-27. Italian translation by Rosa Maria Colombo in *Belphagor*, XXII (1967), 125-51.

the autonomy of art and literature, the Eliotic classicism of his taste (tempered, however, by a great intellectual curiosity and vastness of experience), the call for a new approach to the study of comparative literature, the neohumanism nourished by Masaryk's thought and by that of the Babbitt-More-Eliot tradition (even this, however, accepted with many reservations and corrections, and mixed with many other experiences).

The whole enterprise of aesthetics and art is being challenged today: the distinction between the good, the true, the beautiful, and the useful known to the Greeks but most clearly elaborated by Kant, the whole concept of art as one of the distinct activities of man, as the subject matter of our discipline, is on trial.....

Whatever the merits of these criticisms of the great tradition of aesthetics may be —and I am willing to grant much to the critics of its obscurities, verbalisms, and tautologies —the main conclusion, the abolition of art as a category, seems to me deplorable in its consequences both for art itself and for the study of art and literature. We see the consequences today at every step; the new sculptor displays heaps of scrapmetal or assembles large grocery boxes, Rauschenberg exhibits clean white canvasses as his early works, and an enthusiastic critic, John Cage, praises them as 'landing-places for lights and shadows.' The composer of 'concrete' music produces the noises of machines and the streets,.....All distinctions between art and reality have fallen. All arts tend toward self-abolition. Some of these acts or works obviously need not be taken seriously. They are elaborate hoaxes as old as Dada or as Marcel Duchamp.....I hope I am not suspected of lack of sympathy with modern art, the avantgarde, or experimentation when I judge that art, in these symptoms, has reached the zero point and is about to commit suicide.

It is time for us to return to an understanding of the nature of art. A work of art is an object or a process of some shape and unity which sets it off from life in the raw. But such a conception must apparently be guarded against the misunderstanding of being 'art for art's sake,' the ivory tower, or asserting the irrelevancy of art to life. All great aestheticians have claimed a role for art in society and thought that art flourishes

best in a good society. They knew that art humanizes man that man becomes fully human only through art. It seems to me time that literary study again recognises the realm of art and stop being all things to all men, that it returns to its old task of understanding, explaining, and transmitting literature. Otherwise it will dissolve into the study of all history and all life. I know that students —and not only young students —are often restive with such apparent limitations. Literature for them is simply an occasion or a pretext for the solution of their personal problems and the general problems of our civilization. But literary scholarship, as organized knowledge, needs such limitation. Every branch of knowledge must have a subject matter. Only through the singling out which does not mean complete isolation —of the object can there be advance in understanding and penetration.

The page cited is indicative of Wellek's faithfulness to certain principles continuously upheld by him during the whole course of his career. His insistence on the autonomy of the field of literary study and on the specificity of the methods that must be employed are typical. But in this page, there also occurs a shift of emphasis, one perceives less enthusiasm for the technical aspects of the literary work (a smaller dose of "formalism") and a tendency to attribute greater significance to the neohumanistic conception of art. In addition, one may observe the presence, on the whole, of a detached, calm, almost academic tone. From this page there transpires a love for the "humanizing" qualities of literature which here reveals itself to be greater in Wellek than what might have been imagined. One was led (forgetting his contributions in the first person as a critic and his vast knowledge of so many texts of world literature)¹⁴ to emphasize the detached and critical tone, the intellectual and conceptual rigor, the tendency to introduce successive operations of reduction to "specificity": from literature to the criticism

14. One of the areas in which Wellek intervened in the first person as a critic is that of the European novel (especially the Russian) of the nineteenth century. In addition to the seminars for the students of Iowa and Yale, he has also dedicated some writings to this: "Introduction" to N. Gogol, *Dead Souls*, New York, Rinehart, 1948, pp. V--XI; "Introductions to Balzac, Flaubert, Dickens, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Ibsen," in *World Masterpieces*, edited by M. Mack, New York, Norton, 1956, II, pp. 1693-1727; "Introduction: A Brief History of Dostoyevsky Criticism," in *Dostoyevsky, a Collection of Critical Essays*, edited by R. W. Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1962, pp. 1-15 (a history of Dostoyevsky criticism); "Why Read T. A. Hoffmann?" in *Midway*, VIII (1967), pp. 48-56.

of literature to the criticism of the criticism to the criticism of the criticism of criticism, etc.

Actually one finds in Wellek those qualities which we already pointed out and which are recognized by all : the capacity of capturing the essential nucleus and the discriminating line within the complex of ideas and attitudes of a whole culture,¹⁵ or the ability to reconstruct the fundamental system of ideas and taste of a poet or of a critic (without, at the same time, renouncing definitions and judgments—so much so that if in regard to the French comparatists we spoke of “accounting,” in regard to Wellek one might speak of a “court of justice,” not of a high court, full of exaggerated gravity, but instead of a court of the English type, with a good-natured judge who believes in certain fundamental “values,” and then judges facts and motives empirically). Or one might note, additionally, his ability in conducting confrontations and discriminations—*Confrontations* and *Discriminations*—and also the great lucidity, as is demonstrated by his many reviews, in reporting the content of a book, judging its merits and defects,¹⁶ and his extraordinary talent of knowing how to summarize in a precise and synthetic judgment, or in an encyclopedia “entry,”¹⁷ the history of a concept,¹⁸ or the many aspects of a problem, or the entire work of an author, of a movement, of an entire literary period. But there are also some other qualities in Wellek which are complementary to the preceding : a great intellectual curiosity for every aspect of the history of culture and of human behavior, a flexibility in comprehending the most diverse situations, a capacity for observing every question from different sides, even contradictory, and a substantial “good sense,” which always makes him weigh right and wrong, good qualities and defects, etc.

Someone has spoken of eclecticism. Wellek would prefer to present his as a mediating position and, according to requirements of logic, will continue to fall

15. Excellent examples, in addition to the books on Kant and on modern criticism, are to be found in the essays gathered in *Confrontations*, cit. A careful examination of the problems of method for this type of study in *Confrontations*, pp. 163-66.

16. Wellek's reviews are exemplary : terse, to the point, almost pedantic in indicating oversights and errors, at times devastating but always careful in pointing out new contributions.

17. Wellek has written many encyclopedia “entries”; see, for example, those on Czech and Slovak literature and on many writers in *A Dictionary of Modern European Literature*, edited by Horatio Smith, Columbia University Press, 1947 (partly translated into Italian and published in the encyclopedia *Il Milione*, Novara, Istituto Geografico De Agostini, 1960, IV, pp. 76-78).

back on the healthy necessity of always discriminating and evaluating. Perhaps one of the ways of understanding his position is to measure it against that of so many other critics or theorists of literature whom he has dealt with; every time, for every encounter, one can gather motives of concurrence and motives of rejection, and a dialectical game between the desire to come nearer to the author studied and the necessity of taking one's distances in order to judge him.

Take, for example, Wellek's reaction to Cassirer, when the latter published his American book, *An Essay on Man*. After having synthetically described the contents and defined its merits, here are the reservations:

Cassirer distrusts naturalism in the sense that he sees the weaknesses of nineteenth century positivism as he can criticize them, for instance, in the simplifications of Taine. But substantially he does not seem too distant from certain forms of pragmatism and instrumentalism: we hear little of his earlier emphasis that there is a primeval activity of the spirit in all these symbolic forms and that his philosophy of symbolic forms thus vindicates the fundamental thesis of idealism. Something has happened: one can only guess that Cassirer, possibly under the influence of his new American environment, has given up the metaphysical implications of his position. I, for one, cannot help feeling that his earlier views were more coherent and more convincing.

Take the relations between Wellek and Auerbach, which appeared publicly in the reviews and writings of both men,¹⁹ and also privately in

18. There is a whole series of essays dedicated by Wellek to the History of a concept or of a term, in particular of the terms designating the great literary movements of modern Europe: Baroque ("The Concept of the Baroque in Literary Scholarship" in *CC*, pp. 69-127); Neoclassicism ("The Term and Concept of Classicism in Literary History," in *Aspects of the Eighteenth Century*, edited by E. R. Wasserman, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1965, pp. 105-28), Romanticism ("The Concept of Romanticism in Literary History," in *CC* pp. 128-221), Realism ("The Concept Realism in literary scholarship," in *CC*, pp. 222-255). An essay on symbolism is in preparation. To this type of research, essentially directed to the tracing of the History of an idea or of a term indicating as in a repertory the dates and names of those who expressed such an idea or used such a term in history, one can contrast (once having recognized the instrumental utility of the research) a famous statement by Whitehead on the existence in each epoch of conceptions so diffused and rooted in the collective consciousness that nobody feels the need to express them (*Adventures of Ideas*, New York, Macmillan, 1956, pp. 12-13).

conversations and discussions during the years in which both taught at Yale. Wellek's judgment on Auerbach is composed of agreement and dissent, enthusiasm and differentiation. "I admire the book [*Mimesis*] greatly, and I have said so in public.....but the book is hardly criticism in the sense of judgment as it rather uses (legitimately for its purposes) stylistics, intellectual history, and sociology for a history of the human condition." (Letter to B. Heyl, in *Sewanee Review*, LXVIII [1960], p. 349.)

And take, in addition, Wellek's reaction to Croce,²⁰ to Richards,²¹ to Leavis,²² to Lovejoy,²³ to N. Frye,²⁴ to Emil Staiger²⁵ and to many others. The very *History of Modern Criticism* is wholly conducted according to the same criterion of assigning to each critic a precise place in history, of defining his merits and defects, of measuring his relevance with respect to the problems of today. The volume on the twentieth century which we all await with impatience, some chapters of which have already been previewed,²⁶ will to a greater degree than the others put its author to the test. Wellek will be directly involved in a dialogue with many of his contemporaries on the theories and critical preferences in the midst of which he himself had had to operate. Sympathy, understanding, severity of judgment, the ability to contrast and discriminate will be once again, we may be certain, the most outstanding characteristics of the scholar.

19. Cf. Wellek's review of *Mimesis* already cited (1954); Auerbach's review of the *History of Modern Criticism*, in *Romanische Forschungen*, LXVII (1956), pp. 387-97; many passages of Wellek's *CC* (*ad indicem*) and the obituary in *Comparative Literature*, X (1958), pp. 93-94.
 20. Cf. "B. Croce: Literary Critic and Historian," in *Comparative Literature*, V (1953), pp. 75-82.
 21. "On reading I. A. Richards," in *The Southern Review*, n.s. III (1967), pp. 533-54.
 22. Cf. the article cited in *Scrutiny*, (1937) and in *CC* p. 358.
 23. Wellek often speaks of Lovejoy and of his "history of ideas"; cf. the review of *Essays in the History of Ideas*, in *Germanic Review*, XXIV (1949), pp. 306-10 and what he says in the review to M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, in *Comparative Literature*, VI (1954), pp. 178-81.
 24. Cf. the review of *Fearful Symmetry*, in *Modern Language Notes*, LII (1944), pp. 62-63 and *CC*, pp. 337-38.
 25. Cf. the review of M. Wehrli, *Allgemeine Literaturwissenschaft*, in *Erasmus*, VI (1953), p. 365.
 26. One may find the overall scheme previewed in the essay "The Main Trends of Twentieth Century Criticism," in *CC*, pp. 344-64 and above all in the long article "Literaturkritik" for the German Encyclopedia *Lexicon der Weltliteratur* 20. Jahrhundert, Freiburg im Breisgau, Herder, 1961, I, pp. 178-261 (published since in *Encyclopedia of World Literature in the 20th Century*, ed. W. B. Fleischmann, New York, Frederick Ungar, 1969. Vol. II, pp. 284-328.)

Scuola Normale
 Pisa (Italy)

Translated by : Marie Antoinette Manca
 Italo-American Medical Education Foundation,
 Via Boncompagni 16 Roma, Italy.

TRUTH AND TROTH, FACT AND FAITH : ACCURACY TO THE WORLD AND FIDELITY TO VISION *

MURRAY KRIEGER

“**W**hat is truth ? said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer.”

The story of education and of letters and science is the story of those who stayed for an answer, the story of those who, in their search for truth, honored it as did Sir Francis Bacon, who opened his essay, “Of Truth,” with the sentence I have just quoted. In that essay, however, Bacon reveals that his devotion is to a truth conceived too simply and singly and absolutely. It is because he had unquestioning confidence in the firm singleness of that truth and its accessibility to us that he rejected a more skeptical outlook. Thus his irritation with Pontius Pilate’s contemptuous suggestion that truth is indefinable, unknowable. Next to such an austere and fixed sense of truth as Bacon’s, even the poet’s imaginative flights are found not altogether trustworthy by him in that essay. This attitude should perhaps not surprise us when we think of Bacon’s devotion to empiricism, the doctrine that truth can be derived wholly from generalizations drawn from the raw data of our sensory experience. From such a perspective the poet as imaginative fiction-maker can be seen as a downright liar; and this is about what Bacon suggests.

But let us look at a poet’s less confident, if perhaps more human and complex, attitude toward truth as he seeks to be more than just a teller of lies. One of Bacon’s contemporaries—in fact, some misguided souls think Bacon wrote the works we attribute to this poet—wrote the following commentary on truth: Shakespeare’s Sonnet 113. In it two truths are at war: the truth of the world and the truth of the mind, or put otherwise—the truths sponsored by fact and by faith.

* An address delivered to the first Honors Convocation at the University of California, Irvine, on June 16, 1978.

Since I left you, mine eye is in my mind ;
 And that which governs me to go about
 Doth part his function and is partly blind,
 Seems seeing, but effectually is out ;
 For it no form delivers to the heart
 Of bird, of flow'r, or shape which it doth latch ;
 Of his quick objects hath the mind no part,
 Nor his own vision holds what it doth catch ;
 For if it see the rud'st or gentlest sight,
 The most sweet favour or deformed'st creature,
 The mountain or the sea, the day or night,
 The crow or dove, it shapes them to your feature.

Incapable of more, replete with you,
 My most true mind thus mak'th mine eye untrue.

The final line ("My most true mind thus mak'th mine eye untrue") couples the two kinds of truth, and they are mutually incompatible. Only one of them would satisfy Bacon, whose commitment to inductive knowledge riveted his interest to empirical reality, to the exclusion of anything less tangible and unambiguous. The speaker in the sonnet has yielded up the usual truth of the eye—or rather his eye sees a truth other than what is presumably there to be seen—seen neutrally, that is, as if it were independent of our idiosyncratic vision. The objects of our daily experience are thus being seen by the speaker not as what they are, but as what the mind, filled with love and with the sole object of that love, must have them be. So the eye, though it "seems seeing", "effectually is out", having abandoned its place and retreated to the mind. But it has abandoned its role along with its place. Its truths are no longer those of sight, but those of thought. Yet the eye still "*seems* seeing", still appearing to capture birds and flowers and the rest of common experience. But it now sees those things only by means of—under the aegis of—the vision and love of his beloved.

All objects of sight, however imperfect, are adapted to the perfection of the beloved. In effect, all has been collapsed into love's vision of goodness, a vision suddenly become the poet's sole reality. Hence the variety of the world, and its many differing values as we move through the stages from the worst to the best it has to offer, all are reduced to that single perfection.

For if it [the eye] see the rud'st or gentlest sight,
 The most sweet favour of deformed'st creature,

The mountain or the sea, the day or night,
The crow or dove, it shapes them to your feature.

All the world's oppositions, its good and evil, are merged into one sublimity as all the world's objects are equally shaped to the one set of features. Everything is seen through the one lens which reads the world as if beauty were the only reality. Oppositions like the crow and the dove melt into the oneness of a vision regulated only by love's fidelity. The Manichaeian reality, which splits the good and evil of the mixed world we all know, dissolves into the one flawless reality which the poet's mind permits the poet's eye to see.

At the same time, the poet makes it clear that the opposed dualisms still exist in the empirical world, however he may read them. Filled only with his friend's goodness so that he can see nothing else, the poet yet acknowledges the untruth of that vision fostered by being "true" to the beloved:

Incapable of more, replete with you,
My most true mind thus mak'th mine eye untrue.

But in this single line the criteria for what is "true" are shrewdly double. The truth of the eye has been traded, not for error, but for another truth, the truth of faith. It is not that one is true and the other false absolutely, but that each is true (and the other false) under specified conditions. And the poet who writes the poem recognizes that, as lover, his vision is limited. He sees doubly, both the truth seen by himself as lover and the worldly truth he thereby distorts.

Thus the two truths are in conflict with one another, the warm truth dictated by love's faith against the cold truth seen by the ruthless eye of empiricism. That older notion of truth which we used to call "troth" (or faith) resists the newer truths unmodified by faith in an historical conflict between world views and concepts of value. The choice seems to be between being true to a person and a belief and being true to a dead world, a world of inhuman objects. And the two truths seem incompatible with one another, even though history has seen the word "truth"—in accordance with the scientific spirit of Bacon's "advancement of learning"—pretty well appropriated by literal reality at the expense of faith.

Still, even now, for Shakespeare, the faithful, trothful vision that gilds our experiential world, turning brass into gold, resists yielding to what a grimmer

realism (the realism of the Baconian scientist) may insist upon as the only truth. If this gilded version of reality is taken as actual — and not just as illusionary— then, as Shakespeare is to suggest, the lover is a successful alchemist in that he has literally transmuted impure materials into pure gold, elixir of the life of the spirit. His golden vision, a world seen through the idolatrous eyes of love, is thus treated as an alchemical transformation of the world, which has truly, and not just metaphorically, turned all dross into gold. But even if the poet is persuaded of the alchemy, is he not aware too —in his more skeptical moments— that it is also a deceptive flattery of the world which raises it to values higher than it deserves? The next sonnet in the sequence, no. 114, completes the argument by confronting just this need to decide whether the golden vision is alchemy —and thus a new and miraculous truth —or is mere flattery, and thus a deceptive untruth.

Or whether doth my mind, being crown'd with you,
Drink up the monarch's plague, this flattery?
Or whether shall I say mine eye saith true,
And that your love taught it this alchemy,
To make of monsters and things indigest
Such cherubins as your sweet self resemble,
Creating every bad a perfect best
As fast as objects to his beams assemble?
O, 'tis the first! 'Tis flatt'ry in my seeing,
And my great mind most kingly drinks it up.
Mine eye well knows what with his gust is greeing,
And to his palate doth prepare the cup.
If it be poison'd, 'tis the lesser sin
That mine eye loves it and doth first begin.

To turn "monsters" into "cherubins," thus creating "every bad [as] a perfect best," would indeed be an act of alchemy, one produced under the influence of a transformed vision of truth such as faith alone allows. Still, the poet concedes that his special vision may be no more than flattery of the world, and hence an inaccurate exaggeration, at least when it is viewed from the world outside faith. So his eye is forced to be the flatterer, feeding flattery's poison to the love-smitten mind in response to its demands. But, the poem ironically concludes, the eye— though a conscious flatterer —is so enamored of the beauteous golden vision it is obediently creating for the mind that it begins to worship that vision itself, taking

it as if it were the alchemical reality indeed. In effect, the eye becomes self-deceived before it begins to deceive the mind about the heightened nature of reality. It believes its own vision which it began by creating to sooth the visionary needs of the love-sick mind. Its flattery becomes its truth, all that it is capable of seeing as its reality, at whatever expense to the eye's old naked truth.

Shakespeare, at once pious and skeptical about the poet's and the lover's vision (or rather the vision of the poet *as* lover), sees it as perhaps false if viewed from the world's cold fish-eye of objectivity, though as vision it is the only truth he has, a truth which he rushes to embrace. The beloved, as the poet's god, cannot countenance anything in the world that falls short of perfection. Through the beloved, love transforms the poet's mind into a sun god which alchemizes all it touches, like the sun turning everything it shines upon into gold (or is it only the appearance of gold?). Thus, we are told, the mind creates "every bad a perfect best/As fast as objects to his beams assemble." This is what Shakespeare in another sonnet has called the "heavenly alchemy" of the sun, the god which transforms our imperfect world, a god empowered by the faith engendered by the perfection of the beloved. This vision is so persuasive that it persuades the eyes themselves, despite their normally world-bound character as the prime agent of empiricism. The eyes trade their passive, receptive role for an active, transforming role.

But if, as Shakespeare here suggests, our illusion —as our vision —becomes our reality, thanks to the persuasion of our act of faith, then what indeed is truth for us (if I may return to Pilate's question)? Our visionary god, inspirer of our faith, is that which provides the lens for the world we see. What we seem to find there for us to see derives from our faith in the view of the world to which we devote ourselves, whatever our field of interest or avenue of approach to our reality. As the love poet's world is a vision shaped for him by his faith in his beloved as the god who makes his reality, so we have our own faiths and gods creating visions which become the coherent realities within which we operate. Indeed, Shakespeare's conviction that the eyes themselves, though the would-be agents of naked empiricism, fall prey to the illusion permitted by the lens of consciousness may remind us of recent acknowledgements in the realm of science that empiricism is itself a fiction.

To say empiricism is a fiction is to admit that it also rests on faith, even though many scientists have never questioned their assumption that theirs is a privileged series of claims which alone are in touch with naked, illusion-free

reality. This concession to the plurality of scientific fictions (or "truths") is essentially what is given us by the philosopher of science, Thomás Kuhn, in his influential book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, when he insists that universally accepted "facts" of scientific common sense are actually constructs within one of many possible scientific "paradigms" (to use his word). In effect, then, our notions about a neutral and immediately available "objective" world are seen as inventions, fictions—as much dependent on our faith in the controlling paradigm as our more spectacularly illusionary worlds of faith like the poet's. Similarly, Karl Popper's famous critique of empiricism may remind us that our experiential generalizations are actually based, not on discovered repetitions among objects we observe, but on our expectations which stage the necessity of the repetitions. Our experience thus becomes shaped by what our hypothetical model of experience permits, so that the raw data of experience is anything but raw since, rather than being simply "given," the data have been created in response to the demands of that model. The patterns we think we find in them are those which our expectations, governed by the model which our hypothetical vision imposes, have created so that we may find them. So in Popper as in Kuhn, rather than the neutral world itself, what we confront is our illusion of what the world must be for us to constitute it for ourselves as our world—in accordance with our faith (or fiction) concerning what it is seen by us as being.

In other words, all truth is really a form of troth: we are all in the position of Shakespeare's lover. We can see only actively and transformingly; we do not receive passively. There is, from the perspective of those viewing it, no neutral or naked world—only the world dressed in our vision of it as our faith constructs its paradigm of it so that it may be brought to life for us. And so the arts and the sciences proceed, doing the marvelous things they have in their history done in their faithful service of their various promising—which is to say productive—paradigmatic visions. Viewed this way, the similarities among the arts and sciences stand out more than their differences do. It is no wonder that, as we view their flowering variety through the centuries, we look more admiringly at Shakespeare's complex version of the problematic of truth than we do at Bacon's unilateral commitment which traps him within his own monolithic fiction. If this pluralistic notion deprives science of its privileged place with respect to truth and therefore leaves science not much better off than poetry, my own faith as a literary critic must think that this is a pretty good place to be left, that science has not thus been made to suffer as much as some of my scientific friends might fear. On the contrary, I see this fellowship between the arts and the sciences in the

visionary truths they share as an elevation for science, as well as an opening-outward.

It is in this sense that the literary student has his role to play here today : in that— as we saw in my treatment of the two Shakespearean sonnets —he deals with written works created expressly for the illusionary fiction or vision itself. Out of this visionary capacity, fully exploited for its own sake, emerge the arts and sciences and the individual works in them all, each as its own maker of vision for human comfort, for human use, and for human understanding. Perhaps this is one of the messages which the poet —as the original player with fictional metaphor as his instrument of faith —brings to the rest of us : that as we approach our own activities we are to recognize, and not to fear, our own visionary metaphors and the act of faith that activates them. For they are the mark of our humanity, whatever our field of visionary study, and through them we begin our control over the otherwise dead objects of a world unimposed upon by human vision.

As it does with vision, art also teaches us, and the scientist in us to take the concept of illusion seriously, as more than a make-believe deception. As creatures locked in the egocentric predicament —with access to experience only through our senses and the subjectivity behind them —we have illusion as what we have to live with when we live in our world. In the spirit of the great art historian, Ernst Gombrich, author of the ground-breaking book, *Art and Illusion*, we must come to appreciate both the source of art in its illusionary nature and, conversely, the source of all our illusionary obsessions in what art offers us. The association of art with appearance —with what the Greeks called *aesthesis* or the 19th-Century Germans called *Schein* —is as old as our study of the arts : I suppose we have always known that the arts help us to see and to find a human reality in what is apparently —even if only fictionally —there. According to this aesthetic tradition, art teaches us not to associate illusion with error or deception —in short, with delusion. We thus learn to compare an illusion (in the sciences as in the arts) not with an inaccessible “objective” reality —that neutral fiction beyond all illusion — but with other illusions, recognizing (as humanists all of us) that we are dealing with a world of human constructs. What we must attend to, then, are all our multiple human realities as they are created by all the visions which frame our consciousness. And perhaps it is the daring of the poet to confront the illusionary nature of his activity which leads the way by giving illusionary courage to the rest of us.

Using Shakespeare's example as our allegory, then, I have tried to talk about faith and love—not sentimentally, I hope, but in accord with our profoundest and most human capacity for original vision. We have looked at what our reality becomes as it is touched by faith in the peculiar god we have chosen to define our consciousness. This unconscious choice of our "necessary fiction" (as the poet Wallace Stevens calls it) frees our capacity to see (to see *by shaping*) a more meaningfully formed world than the one we have been "given." Faith and vision are thus humanistic values which can be shared (indeed *are* shared) by all creators in sciences as in the arts, perhaps more than ever (and more desperately than ever) shared in these often inhumane days. Should our education, in whatever field, be about anything except faith and vision in these special senses? Not if it is to lead outside ourselves to the truth beyond. For faith and vision, shape for us the world we know, with the especially daring metaphorical visions of the poet leading the way, and with his critic creeping along behind him.

Professor of English &
Director, School of Criticism and Theory,
University of California,
Irvine (U. S. A.)

INDIAN SILPA TEXTS ON THE DRAWING OF HUMAN FORM

JAYANTA CHAKRABARTI

Human form has been the pivot of Indian art from an early date, particularly from the Gupta period, simply because the mood and feeling, idea and vision of an Indian artist are generally expressed in and through the "appearances" of human form. They might have taken references direct from nature, but while representing the forms, as we see, they have hardly represented the model as such. Only the inner character or the spirit of the appearances are found to be expressed by the artists. It is also recorded in the *Viṣṇudharmottara*, one of the early extant silpa texts : "sammukhatvamathaiteṣāṃ citre yatnād vivarjayet." That is, close study (of an object) should be avoided in a painting. On one occasion, Coomaraswamy mentions that the "composition is valid because all appearances must be, logically, appearances of something other than the appearance itself ; if this were not implicit, we should speak of the 'references' rather than the appearances."² Wang Li, a Chinese doctor, poet and painter of 14th century, in his 'Introduction to my picture of Hua Mountain' has also expressed such an idea in the following statement : "Though painting represents forms, it is dominated by 'idea' (of the object represented). If the idea is neglected, mere representation cannot avail. Nevertheless, this idea is embodied in forms and cannot be expressed without them. He who can successfully represent forms will find that the idea will fill out those forms. But he who cannot represent them will find that not form but all is lost."³ It was believed by Indian artists that unless one can master the appearances, one cannot go deep into the forms and consequently fails to understand and express the spirit of the thing observed. Detailed instructions of human forms— their proportions, stances

1. *Viṣṇudharmottara*, Part III, Ch. 43, Verse 30 b. 2. A. K. Coomaraswamy, *The Figures of Speech or Figures of Thought*, ch. XIV, footnote I of P. 213 (appears on p. 215).

or postures and angles of vision (foreshortening) are, therefore found in the *śilpa* texts. A self-imposed restriction was a necessary discipline for the beginners and apprentices. These instructions seem to be concerned more with the work of a sculptor than with that of a painter, because there was every possibility of the stone being damaged if the artist did not have any precision.

PROPORTION AND MEASUREMENT *

There are frequent references to proportion, that is, *māna* or *pramāṇa*, in the *śilpa* texts in connection with drawing in general and human form in particular. This proportion may mean the relative measurement of forms as also the mental proportion or measurement by which an artist decides how much of the background or the foreground has to be introduced in a painting, or which figure has to be made larger or smaller according to the demand of the subject. The mental proportion or measurement depends on the intelligence, perception and experience of an artist, whereas the relative measurement of forms is a guiding principle for the artists in general and assures the maintenance of a standard.

The *Viṣṇudharmottara* classifies human forms into five types⁴ according to their nature and proportion. The names of the classified types of the male are *Haṁsa*, *Bhadra*, *Mālavya*, *Rucaka* and *Śaśaka* (*haṁso bhadro'tha mālavyo rucakaḥ śaśakastathā | vijñeyah puruṣāḥ pañcā.....*).

The broad measurement of these five types are given in terms of *aṅgula*⁵ measurement. This *aṅgula*, as a unit of measurement, appears to mean the measurement according to one's (artist's) own *aṅgula* (*svenaivāṅgula-mānena*).⁶ So practically there was no standard measuring unit since the shape and thickness of *aṅgula* were liable to vary from person to person. The vertical

3. Arthur Waley, *An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Painting*, London, 1923, p. 245.

4. *V.D.*, Part III, ch. 35, Verse 8.

* The table of the measuring length (as noted by Shrigondekar in the *Mānasollasa*, Vol. II, Introduction, p. 8) is given below :

1. *aṅgula* or *mātrā* = 8 *yavas* (or of $\frac{1}{4}$ *muṣṭi* or closed fist according to the *Śukranīti*.).

1. *golaka* or *kalā* = 2 *aṅgulas* or *mātrās*

4. *mātrās* or 12 *aṅgulas* = 1 *bhāga*

3 *bhāgas* or 12 *aṅgulas* = 1 *tāla*.

5. *aṅgula* is one-fourth of a *muṣṭi* or closed fist (cf. Benoy Kumar Sarkar, *The Śukranīti*, trans., 2nd ed., Allahabad, 1923, p. 169.) 6. *V.D.*, Part III, ch. 35, Verse 9b.

measurements of the five types are noted as follows—*Haṃsa* is 108 *aṅgulas*, *Bhadra* 106 *aṅgulas*, *Mālavya*—104 *aṅgulas*, *Rucaka*—100 *aṅgulas* and *Śaśaka*—90 *aṅgulas*.

The *Brhat Samhitā*⁷ also classifies human form into the same five types, but their measurements, as noted in the text, are almost inverse, that is, 96, 99, 102, 105 and 108 *aṅgulas* respectively.

It is said in the *Viṣṇudharmottara* that the height and the breadth of a figure would be equal (*ucchrāyāmatulyāste sarve jñeyāḥ promānataḥ*).⁸ Dr. Kramrisch explains it as 'the length of the body is equal to the length across the chest along the out-stretched arms from the tip of the right middle finger to the left'.⁹

The *Viṣṇudharmottara* then states the proportion of the various parts and limbs in terms of *tāla* measurement. 'The *tāla* is stated to be 12 digits in extension' (*dvādaśāṅgula vistārastāla ityamidhiyote*).¹⁰ The height of the foot (*pādacchrāya*) upto the ankle is one-fourth of a *tāla*, i. e., 3 *aṅgulas*. The shank is equal to two *tālas* or 24 digits. The shank knee is equal to one *pāda*, i. e., 3 digits. The thigh is 2 *tālas*. The navel is one *tāla* above the penis. The heart is one *tāla* above the navel, and the base of the neck is one *tāla* above the heart. The neck is one-third of a *tāla* and the face is one *tāla*. The distance between the crown of the head and the forehead is one-sixth of a *tāla*. The penis should be (placed) in the middle. The arms (above the elbow) is 17 digits each and the forearms are also of the same length. Half of the chest is 8 digits (*aṅgulas*.) This is the measurement of the *Haṃsa* type according to breadth. The measurement of other types should be calculated in accordance with this (proportion).¹¹

The *Śukraniti Sāra*¹² supplies instructions regarding relative measurements of the other types of male figure in detail (verses 196-255 and 341-402).

The measurement of a *Haṃsa* type (stated above) is followed by the detailed measurements of different parts and limbs in chapter 36 of the *Viṣṇudha-*

7. H. Kern, 'The Brhat Samhita' (Trans), *JRAS*, Vol. VII, 1875, pp. 93-97; also Stella Kramrisch, *The Viṣṇudharmottaram Part III*, Introduction, p. 12. 8. *V.D.*, Part III, ch. 35, verse 9a. 9. Stella Kramrisch, *The Viṣṇudharmottaram—Part III*, p. 35 (foot note)

10. *V.D.*, Part III ch. 35, Verse 11b. 11. *V.D.*, Part III, ch. 35, Verse 1b (the verse begins after 26 lines which are written in prose), also see Priyabala Shah, *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāna* 3rd *Khaṇḍa*, Vol. II, p. 106. 12. Vide Benoy Kumar Sarkar, *The Śukraniti* (trans.) pp. 178-182 verses 341-402.

*rmottara*¹³ in the following order—The circumference of the head is 32 digits. The forehead is 4 digits in height and 8 broad. The temple (*śaṅkha*) measures 4 and their height is 2. The cheeks (*gaṇḍa*) measure 5 digits each and the jaw (*haṇu*) measures 4. The ears measure 2 each with a height of 4 digits. The nose measures 4; at the tip it is 2 in height and its breadth is 3. The extent of the nostril is one digit and the width is double. The position between the nose and the lip measures half a digit. The mouth is four digits in breadth. The lower lip is one. The eyes are one each in extent and 3 in width. The black orb is one-third of the eye and the pupil is one-fifth. The eye-brows are half a digit in width and 3 digits in length etc. etc.

This is the measurement of the *Harṣa* type, and it is the standard measure in relation to which the measurements of other types are to be worked out. (This has been done, we have already noted, in the *Śukraniti Sāra*.)

As regards the female form, ch. 37 of the *Viṣṇudharmottara* states at the very beginning that like the men, women are also of five types.¹⁴ But the respective names of the female types are not recorded. It may be that the female types were also known by the same terms (as that of the males) in their feminine forms. In a few erotic literatures of India, however, human forms (according to their nature) are found to be classified into several males along with the corresponding female types. *Vātsyāyana's Kāma Sūtra* (VI, I, 1—2), for example, mentions three types of men—*śaśa* (hare), *vṛṣa* (bull), *aśva* (horse) and their respective counterparts—*mṛgī* (doe), *vāḍava* (mare) and *hastinī* (female elephant).

A few other information of the female form, of course, are stated in the *Viṣṇudharmottara*¹⁵ which describes that 'a woman should be placed near her male partner so as to reach his shoulder. The waist of a woman should be made thinner by two digits than that of a male and the hip should be made wider by 4 digits. The breasts are to be made attractive and proportionate to the chest'¹⁶. The proportions of the female form are given in further detail in the *Śukraniti Sāra* which mentions that 'the height and thickness of the breasts of women are five digits... The limbs of the females have all to be made up in 7 *tālas*. In the

13. The major part of this chapter (36) is only written in prose (except the last portion consisting of six *śloka*s); the translation of this portion by P. Shah, (*VD. Purāṇa*—3rd *Khaṇḍa*, Vol. II, pp. 106-107) has been utilised with occasional modifications, as necessary.

14. *V.D.*, Part III, ch. 37, Verse I b. 15. *Ibid.*, Part III, ch. 38, Verses 2-3.

image of seven tālas the face is to be (made) twelve aṅgulas or one tāla¹⁷. The female has all the parts of her body fully developed in her sixteenth year, the male in the twentieth.

Detailed instructions regarding proportions and measurements of human forms are also furnished by the Mānasollāsa in the tāla lakṣaṇa (Verses 193-205a) and the sāmānya citra prakriyā (Verses 234-686) sections.

POSIURES OR STANCES

Different postures (sthānas) or stances are referred to in the Viṣṇudharmottara, the Samarāṅgaṇa Sūtradhāra, The Mānasollāsa, the Śilparatna and also in a few Āgama texts. All these texts agree that the major stances are nine. These nine postrures are (stated in the Viṣṇudharmottara, ch. 39, Verses 1-32): (1) rjvāgata (2) anṛju (3) sākikṛta śarīra (4) ardhavilocana (5) pārśvāgata, (6) parāvṛtta (7) prṣṭhāgata (8) parivṛtta, and (9) samānata.

The present text of the Samarāṅgaṇa Sūtradhāra is so corrupt and mutilated that it is very difficult to say anything definite, particularly about the stances. Only this much can be guessed (from the description of the ch. 79, Verses 1-4) that there are nine types of human poses. The Mānasollāsa and the Śilparatna, on the otherhand, give more or less a clear idea about the stances. Both the Mānasollāsa and the Śilparatna propose five varieties of principal stances and the names of the stances, noted in both the texts, are practically identical. In the Mānasollāsa they appear as rju, ardharju, sāci, ardhākṣi and bhittika; whereas in the Śilparatna the principal stances are noted as rju, ardharju, sākika, dvyardhākṣi and bhittika. The Śilparatna also adds that apart from these five stances there are four other types of parāvṛtta or dorsal poses. Thus it appears according to the Śilparatna that the total number of stances is nine. Among them five are frontal and the rest four are dorsal or back view, and this also agrees with that of the Viṣṇudharmottara.

The Mānasollāsa and the Śilparatna refer to the sthānas or stances which are to be calculated on the basis of the positions of the brahma sūtra (central axis line) and the two pakṣa sūtras (side lines). But the nine stances of the Viṣṇudharmottara are not classified with the help of brahma sūtra and pakṣa sūtras. The

16. Stetta Kramrisch, *The Viṣṇudharmottaram Part III*, p. 39 17. Benoy Kumar Sarkar, *The Śukraniti*, p. 179.

position of the different limbs are so vividly described in the Viṣṇudharmottara that the prescribed poses are easily comprehended. The Ardhavilocana or Adhyardhākṣa—sthāna may be cited here as an example. The description of this posture or sthāna, (which is almost a profile pose), is as follows¹⁸.

In the face half-eye is shown and the other half is not shown (or dropped), so also the eye-brows. The contracted forehead should be of one mātrā or one aṅgula. The essential part of the body, which is to be shown, should be exhibited little. The cheek should be measured one-half of an aṅgula and the other half is diminished. The line of the neck should be shown one aṅgula, while the chin should be exhibited one yava, i.e., one-eighth of an aṅgula. Half of the front part of the chest should be shown and the (other) half should be omitted. Similarly, one-aṅgula should remain from the navel cavity. The waist and whatever else, are to be shown half. The adhyardhākṣa is recognised by its very shape. This is also called chāyāgatam.

After mentioning the nine postures the Viṣṇudharmottara opines that these nine poses should be understood for characterizing a particular mood; various other poses can also be imagined and depicted by superior understanding. It is also stated that the background should be properly divided and then the stances should be depicted in accordance with the measurement (of the space).¹⁹

The different stances or postures are said to be represented (according to the Mānasollāsa and the Śilparatna) with the help of three imaginary lines—brahma sūtra or madhya sutra, i.e., the central axis line or the plumb line, and two pakṣa sūtras, i.e., side lines. According to the Mānasollāsa,²⁰ the line which begins from keśānta (where hair ends on the forehead) and passes through the middle of the eye-brows, the tip of the nose, chin, chest and navel to the middle of the two feet (covering from head to the ground), is called the brahma Sutra²¹ or the central axis line. The two side lines or the pakṣa sutras (in case of strictly frontal pose) are usually six aṅgulas away from the brahma sutra on either side. They start from the karnanta (top of the ear) and pass along the

18. V.D., Part III, ch. 39, Verse 111-112; also see trans. of Priyabala Shah, *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāna* 3rd Khaṇḍa, Vol. II, Gaekwad's Oriental Series No. 137, Baroda, 1961 p. 113.

19. *Ibid.* Part III ch. 39 Verses 33-37. 20. Vol. II, ch. I, Verses 177-192. 21. G. K. Srigondekar (ed.), *Abhilasitārtha Cintāmaṇi* or *Mānasollāsa*, 'Gaekwad's Oriental Series, No. LXXXIV, Baroda, 1939, pp 7 and 8 (Introduction).

chin, the middle part of the knees, outside skin (joint of the chest and the arm), and the second finger near the toe to the ground. With the varying distance between the central axis line and the two side lines the five different poses are distinguished.

It is already noted that in the perfect frontal pose (I) *rjusthāna*, the distance between the central axis line and *pakṣa sūtras* or side lines is six digits on both sides (II). *Ardharju sthāna* is that in which the distance from the central axis line (or plumb line) to the one *pakṣa sūtra* or side line is eight angulas on one side and four digits on the other. (III) The *sāci sthāna* is that in which the distance from the *brahma sūtra* to one *pakṣa sūtra* is ten digits on one side and two on the other. (IV) In *ardhākṣika sthāna* the distance from the central axis line to one of the side lines is eleven digits and one to the other. *Bhittika sthāna* is that in which only two side lines would be visible and the *brahma sūtra* (also known as *lamba sūtra*) would disappear, that is to say, one of the side lines (*pakṣa sūtra*) would merge with the central line or *brahma sūtra*.

In the *tiryāṇmana lakṣaṇam* section of the text (*Mān.*, Vol. II, ch. I, Verses 205—234a) there is a description of how to prepare graph-like horizontal lines which help in depicting *parāvṛttā* (dorsal) poses, as well as proper placing of nose, eyes etc. In fact, the *tiryāṇmāna* with its horizontal lines and the three imaginary vertical lines (*brahma sūtra* and two *pakṣa sūtras*) would combinedly give a perfect idea of the position of different limbs and their parts in different movements; it is the easiest process of preparing a proportionate drawing, and helpful for an amateur or beginner. The lines—horizontal and vertical—in fact supply the exact co-ordinates of any point or location in the picture, thus helping production of any necessary enlargement, reduction or exact reproduction.

The *Śilparatna* (Part I, ch. 46, Verses 60—110) also prescribes an identical process of representing the different stances with the help of three imaginary vertical lines—*brahma sūtras*. It also mentions that in *rju sthāna* or perfect frontal pose the distance between the *brahma sūtra* or central axis line and the two *pakṣa sūtras* or side lines is six angulas each; and in different stances the distance of one *pakṣa sūtra* from the central *brahma sūtra* would gradually increase, while the other decrease. In this way the two side lines or *pakṣa sūtras* being shifted from the central axis line would at last form the *bhittika sthāna* in which only the two *pakṣa sūtras* would be visible and the *brahma sūtra* would disappear or merge with one of the *pakṣa sūtra*. The only difference between the *Manasollāsa* and the *Śilparatna*, on this particular point, is that the *Śilparatna*

gives a more comprehensive description of the different parts of the body through which the three vertical imaginary lines pass while showing the different stances in the drawing.

After the description of the five principal stances, the *Śilparatna* speaks of another four stances and thus makes a total number of nine stances. The four stances stated later, are the dorsal (*parāvṛtta* or *parāvarta*) poses. These dorsal views can also be drawn (even by an apprentice) with the help of the three imaginary lines. The four dorsal poses are named, after the first four frontal poses, *ṛjuka*, *ardhaṛjuka*, *sāci*, and *dvyardhākṣi*. In these cases the front side of the body should be turned towards the wall and the back side would be visible.

The *Śilparatna* further states that there may be numerous mixed (*miśra*) poses, apart from the nine poses or *sthanas*. The text also cites an example that while the face is in *ṛjuthana*, the body below the neck may be in another stance. Of course, there cannot be any restriction for an experienced or talented artist. He is allowed to draw any pose which he thinks suitable for his expression.²²

LAW OF FORESHORTENING

After discussing the different stances, the *Viṣṇudharmottara*, in the same chapter (39, Verses 38-46), deals with the principle of foreshortening (*kṣaya-vṛddhi*) which is also universally recognised as one of the fundamental rules of drawing an object. This aspect of drawing, stated as *kṣaya-vṛddhi* (principle of diminishing and increasing), appears only in the *Viṣṇudharmottara*. An artist applies this principle to depict his figure in different angles and poses—dynamic or static. An Indian painter uses it for other purposes too. He uses the principle of *kṣaya* (diminishing) and *vṛddhi* (increasing) in his composition and makes his figures smaller or larger according to their relative importance in the subject. Therefore visual perspective is almost absent in his drawing. It is the multiple perspective or better to say the mental perspective which regulates the drawing of his composition.

Kṣaya-vṛddhi, of course, generally means the process, with the help of which the different poses of a figure can be drawn. Therefore it may be regarded as another expression of the same process which is involved in the execution of different stances. It is natural, therefore that some of the names of *kṣaya-vṛddhi*

22. *Śilparatna*, Part I, Ch. 46, Verses 110b-111a.

coincide with some of the stances. The kṣaya and vṛddhi are applied for showing different parts and limbs (of a body) with which thirteen sthānas or saṁsthānas are said to be composed. These thirteen saṁsthānas are : (1) dṛṣṭagata (2) onṛjugata (3) madhyārdha, (4) ardhārdha (5) sākṛtamukha (6) naṭa (7) gaṇḍaparāvṛtta (8) pṛṣṭhāgata (9) pārśvāgata (10) ullepa (11) calita (12) uttāna and (13) valita.

It is said that these are to be done according to the need of different compositions and maṇḍalas. The maṇḍala (which is a distinct physical movement of the body) is to be shown through the movements of the legs , and maṇḍala has been rendered by Dr. Kramrisch as 'legs in circular motion'²³.

Regarding the representation of female form, the Viṣṇudharmottara says²⁴ that a sportive woman should be represented with one leg in even and steady pose and the other languid (vithvala ²⁵); the body in motion (śarīraṁ ca salīam) should be shown with a leaning (avaṣṭambha) or somewhat running (drutam) at times. The hip (jaghana) should be broad and gracefully twisted.

The laws of proportion, stances and foreshortening prescribed in the śilpa texts, are found to be utilized by the Indian mural painters at Ajantā, Bāgh, Bādāmi, Sittanavasal, Ellorā, Tanjore and other places. The dancing damsels that appear in the court-scenes at Ajantā, or in the feast scene at Bāgh or at Tanjore or other places would show how different poses and bends of the body are beautifully rendered applying the canonical formulae of proportion, stances etc. and the artist's own ingenuity. In actual execution of painting, mixed stances and frontal poses are generally found ; complete dorsal pose is hardly seen in mural painting, though in sculpture it is not completely unknown.

The different sthānas and bhaṅgas (deflexion) of human forms are practically the keys to their movement in space. 'Ceaseless movement which includes pauses and stances, is a subtle and difficult exercise in the control of balance and weight²⁶', and the sthānas, bhaṅgas and mudrās (position of hands

23. Stella Kramrisch, *The Viṣṇudharmottara—Part III*, p. 41. 24. Part III, ch. 39, Verses 49-50. 25. This particular way of standing with one leg engaged (steady) and the other free (languid) reminds us the well-known *contrapposta* or counterpoise pose in which the Doryphorus by (gr) Polyclitus was executed [cf. H.W. Janson, *History of Art*, New York, 1965 (1st. ed. 1962), p. 102.] 26 & 27. Niharranjan Ray, *Idea and Image in Indian Art*, New Delhi, 1973, p. 92.

and fingers), as Dr. Niharranjan Ray observes, 'are but devices as much for the correct distribution and control of balance and weights as for the evocation of the desired *bhāva* and *rasa* through well-known and understood symbols. This too, holds good as much for sculpture and painting as for dancing²⁷', since dance means a movement, full of rhythm, cadence, harmony and balance. This may explain why the *Viṣṇudharmottara* mentions that knowledge of choreography is essential for proper understanding of a painting.²⁸ Dr. Kramrisch also observes, 'what is meant by the derivation of painting from dancing is the movement in common to both these expressive forms... The moving force, the vital breath, the life movement (*cetana*), that is what is expected to be seen in the work of a painter, to make it alive with rhythm and expression'²⁹.

A casual reader of Indian *śilpa* texts may think that Indian artists of earlier period could not give free reign to their fancy and imagination, since all the possible details of measurements and drawing of forms, particularly human forms, are specified and pre-defined. There is no doubt that a broad section of Indian *śilpa* texts contains instructions in detail, but the extant specimens of early Indian art do not give the impression that the artists had to follow any rigid or non-flexible formulae. Had it been so, the entire story of Indian art would have been an endless repetition of a set stereotyped pattern. In fact, a very close and minute study of the *śilpa* texts would show that there are very subtle hints strewn here and there suggesting the imaginative and working freedom of an artist.

Indian artists and aestheticians know it very well that unless one studies the appearances and objective reality, one cannot reach at the deep spiritual unity. It is for this reason that every detail of the form is mentioned to be studied, particularly by the trainees and apprentices, in order to avoid all unsavoury inaesthetic effect of a work of art. In the actual execution of form, we also find that the ancient Indian artists are not ignorant of the anatomy, the law of balance or the 'rhythmic vitality' and yet, as great artists they never emphasise on the mere form or appearance by sacrificing its spirit.

28. cf. *V.D.*, Part III, ch. 2, Verse 4. 29. Stella Kramrisch *The Viṣṇudharmottara*--Part III, Calcutta 1928, p. 10.

THEORY OF IMPERSONAL ART

A. C. SUKLA

The purpose of this essay is not to trace any history of the idea of impersonality in art, nor does it aim at offering any 'final solution' of the problem. It proposes to make an attempt at clarifying some of the intricacies in the views of the latest pleader of this theory by throwing some light through the arguments of the ancient Indian critics.

I

In continuation of the anti-romantic movement of Hulme and Pound, in rejection of the romantic concepts that poetry expresses the personal feelings and emotions of the poet, that the poet the creator is very much present in his poem the creation, that there are specific emotions, feelings and subject-matter suitable for poetry and analysis of poetry needs an analysis of the 'genius' of the poet Eliot gave a final shape to the modern classicistic idea of the impersonality of art i. e. the poet is as impersonal as the scientist and poetry is a sort of inspired mathematics "which gives us equations for the human emotions."¹

In spite of the highly eclectic character of Eliot's mass of critical writings and a number of knotty and confusing critical phrases and jargons it is not difficult to summarise systematically the basic ideas of his poetics from some major portions of his writings, particularly his essays "Tradition and the Individual Talent", "The Metaphysical poets", "Perfect Critic" and "Imperfect Critic" and the essay on *Hamlet*." Tradition and the Individual Talent gives us the key-note to his critical assumptions which he tries to justify in other essays. He stresses two points there : a poet is not an isolated individual, as no other individual is, from others of the society or country or from the humanity as a whole. Each and every moment of the immemorial and unending Time is

1. Ezra Pound, *The Spirit of the Romance*, London 1910 p. 5.

interdependent; thus past is not buried in the dead past, nor is future something new and uncertain. Past, present and future are in a way causally and logically related though without losing the significance of each moment in the eternal flux of this Time. Thus a poet as an individual and as a part of his tradition must be assessed simultaneously at the time of judgment.

The second point deals with the material, the process and finally with the nature of poetic creation and thereby of all artistic creations in general.

The material for all art is emotion, but it is not the personal emotion of the artist. Logically, it follows from Eliot's major assumption stated above that as the artist is not an isolated person from the whole tradition, the emotions that are the materials of his art cannot be also strictly personal. They must be impersonal in the sense that they must represent the emotions of the whole tradition (the typical emotions) of which he is an organic part. Thus the romantic view, that the poet directly expresses his own personal emotions i. e. his experiences of sorrows and miseries, happiness and suffering, is rejected by Eliot. He terms his impersonal emotions as *significant* emotions.

Now the poetic process or the method of artistic operation: it is neither a *recollection* of the emotions in tranquillity, nor a *spontaneous overflow* of powerful feelings— thus straightly a rejection of the Wordsworthian formula. The artistic operation involves three principles— the principles of correspondence or transmutation, coherence and comprehensiveness.² This operation takes place in mind; but unlike the romantic critic Eliot disbelieves in the substantial unity of soul or mind i. e. the suffering mind of the poet cannot be identified with his creative mind; hence there is no question of *recollection* of the poet's personal sufferings and joys. Mind is a medium— a medium of operation. The diversified feelings and emotions of the poet are identified here (principle of comprehensiveness) and, all the parts being integrated into a whole (principle of coherence), are finally transformed into completely a new thing which is poetry (principle of transformation). Though there is some affinity of this operation with the romantic concept of the Secondary Imagination there is nothing mystic in it. The operation is just a technical one quite common in chemical sciences. Mind of the poet is a catalyst which itself being neutral and unchanged like a filament of platinum, which combines oxygen and sulphur dioxide into sulphurous acid, transmutes the

2. F. P. Lu, *T. S. Eliot ; The Dialectical Structure of His Theory of Poetry*, Chicago, 1966, Chap. 2.

raw material of poetry (i. e. emotions neither powerful, nor something new or specific, just ordinary ones). Emotion thus transformed is *significant*, is impersonal, and when expressed in the form of a poem (or art) has its life in the poem itself, not in the history of the poet.

But how to express this transmuted emotion in the form of art ? "The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an objective correlative"; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion ; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience are given, the emotion is immediately evoked."³

Eliot's ideas about the impersonality of art and particularly his theory of 'objective correlative' have been variously criticized by critics like René Wellek, Susanne Langer, Ranson, Praz, Eleseo Vivas, S. E. Hyman and others. But the Indian thinkers, who debated on a parallel problem centuries ago, would have raised the following points : Eliot is not precise as regards his idea of emotions and feelings i.e. whether they are the states of our mind— permanent or transitory and in what way they are related to experience. Sometimes emotion, feeling and experience appear synonymous and interchangeable ; at others the distinction is rather confusing and inconvincing : that emotion signifies the responses of the poet's mind to the external and internal stimuli which furnish the poet with the raw material which he transforms in poetry ; and feeling stands for the responses of the poet's mind which originate not in the external or internal stimuli but are occasioned by the study of literature. Secondly, the poetic process i.e. the transformation of personal emotions into the impersonal poetic emotions is also obscure. Without giving any logic of this transformation Eliot gives an analogy which may be very alluring, but is surely invalid. A living human mind can never be as neutral as a filament of platinum which is simply a piece of lifeless matter ; and this analogy from chemical science is incapable of explaining a sensible affair like the process of poetic creation. Besides, why should art approach the conditions of science at all ? Finally, the method of objectification of the impersonal emotion and its implication that aesthetic enjoyment necessitates the evocation of this (impersonalized ?) emotion in the connoisseur appear misleading from its application to one of the masterpieces of world literature (*Hamlet*) judging it as an artistic failure.

3. Eliot, *Hamlet* (1919).

II

In Indian aesthetics, too, emotions (*bhāva*) are the materials of poetry, drama, music and all other arts ; and poetry is the objectification of the impersonalized emotions of the poet. This means that : (1) emotions will transcend the personal afflictions or interest of the poet himself i.e. it must belong to all so that (2) others will take interest in them without being personally attached to them because of their generalization or impersonalization (*sādhāranya*). (3) This generalization takes place as none—neither the poet nor the reader—takes any utilitarian interest in these emotions their causal efficiency (*arthakriyākāritva*) being lost. This is known as the transformation of *bhāva* (personal emotion) into *Rasa* (impersonalized or generalized emotion) or poetry through a medium which is a complex of character, their actions and transient emotions or feelings (*Vibhāvānubhāvavyabhicārisamīyogaḥ*).⁴

This needs a little elaboration. Emotions are defined by the Indians as mental states (*cittavṛtti*) which may be of two types—permanent or primary (*sthāyī*) and transitory or secondary (*vyabhicārī*) that depends upon the former. Permanent emotion is defined as ‘the emotion which is not swallowed up by other emotions whether friendly with it or unfriendly, which quickly dissolves the others into its own condition like the salt-sea, which endures continuously in the mind, ...’⁵ The permanent emotions are nine in number—Love, Mirth, Sorrow, Anger, Courage, Fear, Aversion, Wonder and Serenity. The transitory states of mind accompany the durable states emerging from it and being again submerged in it and they cannot endure for any length of time without attaching themselves to one of the durable states. They are as many as thirty-three in number like Indifference, Doubt, Jealousy, Pride, Inertia, Patience, Passion and Shame etc.

It appears that the transitory emotions may be roughly identified with the feelings of western psychology though the permanent emotions are something different from the emotions. They are the qualities and activities of both sense and intellect and they form the whole of one’s experience inherited or rather evolved biologically from last lives and are on constant modification and purification until their final extinction when one achieves liberation sacrificing all his desires sensual or intellectual. The Sāṃkhya exegetes plead for a subtle

4. Bharata, Prose after *Kārikā* 31. 5. Dhanañjaya, *Daśarūpa* IV 34.

body, or an ethereal form the material of which is ego (*ahamkāra*) that contains these primary emotions as conditioned by the activities (*karma*) of a man. This ethereal form is the substratum of all the essentials that a man inherits from his continuous tradition (*saṁskāra*) from time immemorial, from the very day of his birth—soul's confinement in a corporeal body. Thus the permanent emotions differ in their degrees and intensity from person to person though they are the same in kind—a combination of three *guṇas*, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.

The root of the poetic process is only one permanent emotion (out of nine) or an emotional complex when a single emotion is predominant. The process involves a stimulant which strikes a particular emotion in a man with strong sensibility. When thus struck, the man who is called a poet, expresses that emotion in language which again *evokes* the same emotion in another man who reads the poem. Two points are to be noted carefully here (1) there may be a personal element in the poet's being struck by the stimuli, but the moment the poet attempts at expression of this emotion it must be impersonal as it loses its personal attachment with the stimuli or with the effect thereof. Otherwise expression would be simply impossible. Commonsense will prove that a lover who is over-whelmed by the sorrow due to the death of his beloved cannot express his emotion in poetry. The Indian critics would not agree with Wordsworth that a recollection of the emotion in tranquility will explain logically this state of impersonality. Recollection of a powerful emotion may rather sometimes move the man much more than before. The only logical explanation of such impersonalization is that the stimulant losing its causal efficiency lacks the utilitarian impact upon the poet. The loss of causal efficiency is proved by the fact that instead of moving the poet blitherly an emotion like sorrow gives him a wholesome pleasure. The reason of the striking of the stimulant is not its personal relation with the poet but the poet's extraordinary sympathetic power. It is this sympathy (*sahṛdayatā*), the root of all aesthetic appreciation which makes the poet's emotion roused by the stimuli and the reader's emotion evoked by the poet's expression of the emotion.

The second point to note is that the intensity and degree of the movement of the emotions of the poet and the reader may vary from case to case as the traditional modification (*saṁskāra*) of their emotions are necessarily different. Hence the impact of the same stimuli will strike different poets with varying intensity and again the intensity of the same emotion in the readers will also vary accordingly.

Abhinavagupta (10th C) gives a very brilliant analysis of this poetic process in his commentary on the *Dhvanyāloka* of Ānandavardhana.⁶ The origin of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the great Indian epic written by the first Indian poet, sage Vālmiki is the lamentation of a he-crane for the death of its she-bird due to shooting of a hunter at the time of their erotic meet. The sage of the purest heart noted it and was deeply touched by the sorrow of the bird for which he cursed the hunter to remain unhappy for ever in his life. Thus the permanent emotion in this sage struck by the lamentation of the bird is sorrow (*śoka*) and, when expressed in language, this emotion is manifested as poetry (*śloka*), the central theme of which is the separation of the hero and heroine ending in pathos.

Abhinavagupta asks : whose sorrow is manifested in poetry ? is it the poet's personal emotion ? and answers in the negative. It is not the personal emotion of the sage poet ; had it been so, there would be no question of poetic activity obviously because a man personally afflicted by sorrow cannot write poetry. The lamentation of the bird of course stimulated the permanent emotion of Sorrow in the sage-poet. But Abhinava suggests that an artist's observation is different from others' in so far as his is an impersonal or detached but sympathetic one. The artist observes things and events as if he is witnessing a drama. Hence he is always compared with a yogin in Indian aesthetics because both of them observe and experience the worldly phenomena indifferently without any personal involvement (*tāṭasthya*). They share others' sufferings and happiness by an identification (*tādātmya*) with others which is based on sympathy only.

A step further : it is not also the sorrow of the bird that they identify with. The bird is only an instrument of this stimulation. Through the bird's sorrow they identify with the emotion in its universal form.

It is very interesting to note here that according to Abhinavagupta a poet himself is primarily an aesthete who first relishes the events of the world-drama and then only expresses this relish in his poetry. In the above case the hunter opens the drama by hunting the bird. The he-bird is the principal character (*vibhāva*) who expresses its permanent emotion of sorrow by lamentation, its symptom (*anubhāva*) and the sage perceives the whole scene as the audience of this drama. The sorrow of the bird touches the sage and being sympathetic *hṛdayasaṁvādi* he identifies his emotion with that of the bird and thus by this process of generalization *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* the identified (or generalized or impersonalized)

6 Op. cit. I. 5.

permanent emotion (*sorrow*) of the sage is transformed into *Karuṇa rasa* (or tragic joy) which he relished himself; and when it became abundant it overflowed in the form of poetry (*śloka*) being regulated by the compositional principles of prosody etc. ⁷ Thus the epic *Rāmāyaṇa* is the verbal manifestation of this generalized (or depersonalized) or aesthetic emotion of sorrow (*Karuṇa rasa*). It is by the same process, again, that the reader's permanent emotion of sorrow is evoked and generalized (or depersonalized) which he enjoys finally.

Two questions may be raised here : (1) is then the reader's enjoyment of poetry inferior to that of the poet as it is twice removed from the perception of the world-drama or, in other words, as it is an enjoyment of enjoyment ? (2) If emotion is the source of poetry, should its intensity and degree condition that of the creation and enjoyment of poetry ? That is to say, can we admit that a poet with more powerful emotion of love can write love poems better than others and, similarly, a reader with intense passion can enjoy it better than others ? Abhinavagupta would answer that though the reader perceives through the perception of the poet it does not mean that his enjoyment will be inferior to the other's. The intensity of the enjoyment depends upon the intensity of *Samskāra* and upon the degree of identification or generalization of the emotion concerned. Thus the reader's enjoyment may be even sometimes more than the Poet's while less at others. As the poet as well as the reader enjoy the same emotion there is no question of any removal of this enjoyment. Similarly, the answer to the second question is that the creation and the appreciation of art do not depend only upon the intensity of an emotion. The more powerful factor being identification and generalization of the emotion by the power of 'sympathy *sahṛdayatā* it is meaningless to say that a lusty man can write and enjoy love poems or an buffoon can write or enjoy comedies or a hero can write and enjoy heroic poems better than others.

The method of impersonalization of emotion in Indian aesthetics is, then, based on logic and common psychology. There is little mysticism of the romantic and symbolist thinkers or any scientific technicality of the modern classicists in it. Though the Indian thinkers talked of a poetic genius (*pratibhā*) it meant a power of varied perception and ability for novel creations and the idea of super naturality (*alaukikatva*) of the poetic genius differs from Coleridge's

7. *ibid* ; see also *Abhinavabhāratī*, VI. 15 and the same on *rasasūtra* for a detailed analysis of the manifestation of *rasa*.

sense of the term. Art is supernatural in the sense that all the natural phenomena—emotions, ideas, impulses and events when transformed in art in their generalized form lose their causal efficiency or the power of personal affliction. Love loses shame, its immediate reaction, aversion hatred and sorrow pain ; and all in their impersonalized form give the poet and the reader a wholesome joy.

III

Some Indian scholars have paralleled Eliot's idea of 'Objective Correlative' with the idea of *rasa* "The emotion here is *Rasa*, the set of objects, the *vibhāvas*, the situation their patterned, organised presentation and the chain of events include not only the episodic stream but also the stream of emotive reactions of the characters to them the *anubhāvas* and the *Samcāribhāvas*." ⁸ But the first objection to such view is that *vibhāva*, *anubhāva* and *samcāribhāva* must be taken together as a complex whole to produce *rasa* where as Eliot's Oc does not demand such a complex. For him, it appears, any one of the three—objects, situation and a chain of events—may serve the purpose. Besides, a set of objects may be a parallel for *vibhāva*, a situation for *uddīpana*, but a chain of events is is never a parallel for the Indian idea of *anubhāva* and *vyobhicāribhāva*. Abhinava gupta's idea of the relishable (*āsvādayogya*) state of the impersonal emotion in the poet which he expresses in poetry and similarly its evocation of the same impersonalized emotion in the form of *rasa* in the reader is foreign to Eliot and other propounders of the theory of impersonal art in the west. Abhinava's analysis of the problem is far more subtle and precise than Eliot's.

Eliot's application of the objectification of the impersonal emotion to the judgement of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Abhinavagupta would argue is a great failure. Eliot's arguments against the success of the play are :⁹

(i) Hamlet (the man) is dominated by an emotion of disgust which is inexpressible, because it is in excess of the external facts that have to express it.

(ii) Hamlet's disgust is occasioned by his mother, but his mother is not an adequate equivalent for it ; his disgust envelops and exceeds her.

(iii) It is a feeling which he cannot understand ; he cannot objectify it, and it therefore remains to poison life and obstruct action.

(iv) The poet Shakespeare did not understand the experience which he wanted to express. It is the buffonery of an emotion which he could not express in art.

8. Krishnachaitanya, *Sanskrit Poetics*, Bombay, 1965 pp. 19-20. 9. *Hamlet* (1919).

And Abhinava's answers to these arguments would have been :

(i) No emotion as such is inexpressible, nor is it in excess of the facts. The truth is that in poetry facts etc. do not state the emotion directly. They suggest it by indirections. This point needs a little elaboration : Ānandavardhana pleads for an indirect way of expression or the suggestive use of language (*pratiyamānārtha* or *dhvani*) as the soul of poetry.¹⁰ Words have two meanings (a) the etymological or direct meaning used in all informational statements such as in history, philosophy and in all sciences (b) and the indirect meaning which is otherwise called *dhvani* (or *Vyañjanā*). When the direct statement is subordinated to the new oblique meaning the impersonalized mental state or emotion emerges into view. Take for example, two expressions regarding the reaction's of maidens on hearing the talk about their marriage—

“When there is a talk of bridegrooms, maidens hold their heads down in bashfulness but there is a perceptible thrill in their bodies, which indicates pleasure in listening to such conversation and their willingness to the proposal (*spṛhā*).”

Here the reaction, the willingness of the maidens being directly stated is just an information where the poetic value is negligible. But in another case in Kālidāsa's *Kumārasambhavam* when Pārvatī listens about her marriage from sage Aṅgīrā in front of her father the same reaction of her is stated indirectly.

“As the sage made this proposal, Pārvatī, who was sitting beside her father, hang her head down and began counting silently the leaves of the lotus she was playing with.”

Her hanging down of head and absorption into a trivial occupation are suggestive of her willingness and rapture at the prospect of being married to the great Lord Śiva whom she loves and adores so much. This is the type of expression necessary for poetic emotion.

(ii) Hamlet's mother, who caused the emotion of disgust in him may not be an adequate equivalent or means of expressing this emotion. There is no need that the cause or stimuli should be the means of expressing the emotion.

(iii) *Rasa* or aesthetic emotion does not require a clear understanding of an emotion or feeling in the *vibhāva*. Confused feelings and emotion can be

very well transmuted (or generalized) aesthetically when expressed obliquely. Anandavardhana gives a very striking example of such type.¹¹ Knowing that the husband has been attracted by some other lady and has already enjoyed her and guessing again the state of agitation and anxiety in her husband for a meeting with his beloved the wife is in a confusion whether she should request her husband to cut off all his relations with the beloved or should tolerate this extramarital love of her husband. This confused feeling has been very successfully suggested in her speech.

“You go (to your beloved). Let me alone suffer from long sighs and lamentations. You have betrayed me, but I don’t want that you should also suffer, like me, for your separation from her.”

Though the wife allows her husband for his meeting with the beloved, her intention is not so for how can a wife tolerate willingly the free love of her husband? Nor can she refrain him from going also, because when he has already betrayed her, how can she expect that he would care for her request? Rather she would feel more offended if he avoids her request again. Thus a confused feeling is not beyond the poetic expression, rather it enhances the poetic beauty *Camatkāra* when expressed through suggestion.

(iv) In *Hamlet* Shakespeare fully understands the emotion that he wants to express. It is aversion of Hamlet which is strengthened and enriched by other mental states and has been fully revealed to us by the significant actions *anubhāvas* and drifting thoughts (*saṁcāribhāvas*). Prof. S. C. Sengupta, a very renowned Shakespearean critic of India has very brilliantly exposed that Shakespeare has very successfully projected Hamlet’s aversion largely through this *dhvani* i.e. through Hamlet’s character— his sporadic activity, his deep disgust, his subtle but confused logic, through the descriptions of the court of Elsinore, situations in Denmark, Hamlet’s encounter with the ghost and Ophelia etc.¹²

IV

All this having been said, an important point of argument raised by T. S. Eliot for the readers and critics of poetry still requires examination : “Honest criticism and sensitive appreciation is directed not upon the poet but upon the poetry.”¹³ In spite of the fact that poetry is the manifestation not of

11. *ibid* gloss to I. 4. 12. Sengupta, *Aspects of Shakespearean Tragedy*, O. U. P. Calcutta, 1972, p. 158 ff. 13. S. W. p. 53.

the personal emotion of the poet but of the emotion impersonalized how far can we exclusively depend upon the text or the verbal structure without any reference to the poet whatsoever? In answer to this question the *Mīmāṃsā*—philosopher's argument is very suggestive. Apadeva (17th c.) states that the absolute verbal autonomy or impersonality is possible only in those cases where the author is unknown. This is possible only in case of the Vedic texts which are simply visioned by the sages, and not written by any one. Thus the impersonal Vedic texts can be said to contain the absolute impersonality and in reading them we have no business to seek for their authors in any way.¹⁴ Other philosophers of the same school support this view that the scriptural word alone is impersonal, external and self-sufficient whereas human language depends upon the intention of the author. The problem of 'intention' in the meaning of texts is a complicated one and should be postponed to another occasion of discussion; but apart from that it is reasonable to conclude that it is illogical to search for absolute impersonality from personal writings or from texts *written* by definite persons. If that would be so, then the very excellence of poetry—the novelty and varieties of poetic vision would be meaningless. Impersonalization of an emotion, love for example, being the same everywhere poetry would be utterly boring. In rejecting the evolutionary process of the artistic perfection Eliot very remarkably states that art never improves though its material changes.¹⁵ Art's materials being emotions we may say that this change in these emotions is due to the personal or individual vision of the poets. An honest critic need not of course search for the biographical data of the poet, but his studies and appreciation will certainly remain incomplete if he does not realize the distinguished personal spirit of the poet that permeates through the whole vision of the poetic creation.

Jyotivihar, Burla
Sambalpur, Orissa (India)

14. *Mīmāṃsānyāya Prakāśa*, Bombay, 1943, P. 2. 15. 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' in *SW*; for a distinction between the concepts of 'personal' and 'individual' see Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, O.V.P., London 1930, pp. 127-28 Eliot might have been influenced by his views.

BOOK REVIEWS

CULTURE, Orissa Cultural Forum; Rashtrabhasha Samabaya Prakashan, Cuttack, 1978, 8vo demy, hard bound, PP 156, Rs 15-00.

The anthology not only provides a general over-view of the present state of affairs in the rich Orissan culture, simultaneously at least in a couple of essays it tries to derive some conclusions irrespective of their rightness or otherwise. The author of the essay 'Tribal Art of Orissa' makes a valuable point when he says that the patterns on 'Gadabā' clothes are imitations of similar patterns on a leopard's back. But he does not stop there. Rather the sense of communion with nature is further extended from the tribals to the non-tribals. By making 'involvement' the catchword the writer distinguishes between tribal attitude to art which is based on their 'fancy, fear, sensation and imagination' and nontribal view of art who believe these things just to be 'enigmas, illusions and products of meaningless labour.' The distinction is true yet developed as a contrast as it is, a bit exaggerated. But the real truth is arrived at only with the sentence : "In spite of such impression due to non-involvement, we cannot avoid admitting that there has been extensive infiltration of tribal art and culture into our social and individual habits." The several examples that follow merely testify to this account.

G. C. Panda's essay 'Odissi Music' which champions the cause of the trilogy of music i. e. 'Nrutya', 'Geeta' and 'Vadya' while expressing happiness over the state of affairs in Odissi 'Nrutya' which is gradually being considered as a classical dance expresses concern over the comparative lack of popular recognition to Odissi 'Geeta' and 'Vadya'. But to my mind, the concern is wholly confounded since non-visual arts like 'Geeta' and 'Vadya' can never be so popular as their visual counterpart 'Nrutya' is and additionally, popularity at the cost of distortions beyond a limit may be perilous to the future of these classical artforms.

D. Pathy's essay on contemporary Indian Art is a welcome departure from the smaller precincts of Orissan culture to that of Indian. In portraying Amrita Sher-Gill to be the first modern Indian painter after the neo-primitivism of Jamini Roy he indeed strikes the right note. Sher-Gill is the obvious choice because she led the crusade against the theory of faithful reproduction of the Bombay School

describing it as impotence in art and secondly, the marked Indianness of her art inspite of her vast western background makes her position somehow outstanding. Besides, the writer's blurring of distinctions between figurative and abstract art is understandable because as he says—'Figurative art is also abstract, since we admire it not because of its resemblance to reality or representation but for those intrinsic qualities which make it a work of art.'

Amongst the other essays K. Mohapatra's Jagannath Puri as a Centre of Culture through the Ages' describes Puri to be a centre of religious, philosophical and literary activities, N. Mishra's 'The Ramayana in Orissan Art and Literature' depicts the epic's pervasive influence on the culture of the state, 'Anti-British Rebellion of 1817' by M. P. Das pays tributes to the bravery of the state Willitia, 'The Evolution of Sanskrit Lyrics in Orissa' by B. Panda enumerates the contribution of Orissa to the treasury of Sanskrit literature and finally A. Pattanayak's. 'Typical Oriya Festival Khudurukuni' highlights the importance of a folk festival of eastern Orissa. These essays are well-documented and thus help achieve the professed aim of bringing to limelight the culture of Orissa but hardly there is any effort to draw some conclusions to enable the particular culture fit into the broad sphere of culture as a whole. Thus intellectually they fall flat upon the readers and do not serve any purpose other than giving a good deal of information on the subject.

The whole book abounds in grammatical, lexical mistakes and mistakes of other types. The absence of an index, a bibliography and non-use of diacritical marks are some of the blemishes which catches the reader's attention at the first glance. Anyhow, as a well-informative maiden venture it anticipates more erudite publications by the Forum in the times to come.

Dhiren Das : *Catara Jathara Jatra—The Theatre* Published by Smt. Padmini Das, Bhubaneswar (Orissa) 1976. 1/8 Double Crown, pp. 56 Hard bound Rs. 15/- .

Mr. Das, who has made performing arts his career and cultural upheaval of the country his target, has given here a new insight to his readers. In claiming the Ranigumpha of Khandagiri at Bhubaneswar to be a middle-sized rectangular Play House, which perhaps fulfils all the conditions prescribed by Bharata Muni, he has investigated a lot of materials from the history of ancient Orissa to the Sanskrit dramaturgy and has sufficiently shown his probing mind capable of penetrating perception. He is tempted to suggest— "It could also be that 'Nāṭyaśāstra' was written by Bharata Muni after studying the measurements of

Ranigumpha Theatre built by Kharavela” (P. 34) but avoids any critical analysis or comment being aware of his limitations of historical speculations. Nevertheless, it is unfair on the part of a scholar to assert an inference about something non-existent : “For me and from now on for all, it is going to be identified for all times to come, what exactly it is, for which it was built by king Kharavela..... It is a Play House or Theatre.”

Anyhow the comparison is meticulous and the author has described the similarities between the two with the gusto of a seasoned lawyer even through the lawyer sometimes interprets meaning to his advantage. Ranigumpha, the author advocates, possesses all the features prescribed by Nāṭyaśāstra such as Raṅgapitha, Raṅgaśīrṣa, Supiṭham, Mattavāraṇi, Śaddāruka, Nepathya Gruha, etc. In making this and similar other claims for other caves in Khandagiri—Udayagiri hills the plea of a theatre complex that he has made embraces almost all types of performing arts and these include Nāṭa, Gita, Vadita, Usava and Samaja of Kharavela’s inscriptions as well as their popular modern variants such as Jātarā, Dhuduki, Nabaraṅga, Nāṭa, Dāsakāṭhia, Paṭa and Daṇḍanāṭa. Thus a solution to the origin of the age-old Catarā or Jatharā or Jātrā has been found (!) and in doing this if the author has committed certain stylistic errors such as use of frequent question marks (pp. 10-11) or deliberate avoidance of diacritical marks (which is inevitable for the works of this type) or spelling errors like ‘pronunciation’ and ‘it’s’ (p. 6) this is to be brushed aside by the author’s thematic singlemindedness and technical plus-points of the book such as neat printing, appropriate photographs and imaginary illustrations. Indeed in the pages of Mr. Dash’s book the caves of Khandagiri and Udayagiri re-live and resound with the music of Dundubhi, Mridanga and Panava to remind the people of Orissa of their glorious past.

B. S. Baral

University College of Engineering,
Burla, Sambalpur, Orissa, India.

G. C. Nayak, *Essays in Analytical Philosophy*, Santosh Publications, Cuttack, 1978, hard bound, 8vo demy pp 210, Rs 35/-

The analytical trend of philosophy does not aim at giving us any new 'idea' of speculation, rather in a way, it aims at destroying the so-called 'ideas'. Most of the philosophical problems, it believes, arise out of misuse of language and the troubles due to them are over when this misuse is detected by means of linguistic analysis. This is thus more a method than a theory which has been a very attractive fashion in the history of post-war European thought.

Language is a miraculous discovery of man to avoid the difficulties in expression and communication of his feelings, emotions and thoughts and is undoubtedly a great advantage over his primitive fore-fathers who used gestures and postures for this purpose. But to a modern man the problems of language have been so great and complicated that, he feels, his discovery has turned into a labyrinth for him. When language is incapable of expressing most of our thoughts and feelings the attempt at judging the validity of our thoughts by the analysis of language that expresses it is certainly paradoxical. In stead of being a therapy in most cases it has been a disease—a futile intellectual gymnasticism. But though practically futile or immediately unproductive, as all gymnastic performances are, it is of great help in at least sharpening our intellect, and the most important profit of such exercise is that it challenges our accepted ideas, thoughts and beliefs, it inspires an impulse for rethinking.

The impact of this analytic method on the recent scholars in Indian Philosophy is a very healthy sign : it frees one from dogmatic conservatism. If some have tried to trace the method itself in the ancient schools of Indian philosophy like *Mīmāṃsā*, grammar and neo-Nyāya, others have applied the western method in studying their philosophical thoughts. Scholars like B. K. Matilal, H. K. Ganguli and J. N. Mohanty have successfully found that this linguistic analysis of the philosophical problems was not unknown to our great thinkers. Centuries ago they were vigorously engaged in debates on the point though they did not agree that language analysis is the only aim of philosophy or philosophical problems can simply be dispensed with by language analysis as language itself is limited and truth eludes language.

In the present volume under review Professor G. C. Nayak has analysed some of the very fundamental problems of Indian philosophy in the light of western analytical method. The volume contains ten essays on : the *Mādhya-*

mika school of Mahāyāna Buddhism, Upanisadic philosophy, Saṅkara's monistic idealism theory of causality in Nyāya and Sāṃkhya systems, Aurovindo's idea of the supramental language, personal identity, subtle body and rebirth, the future of metaphysics and reason.

The Author's erudition is obviously vast and his capability for free thinking is manifestly sufficient and the volume is a valuable addition to the analytical studies of Indian philosophy.

Professor Nayak interpretes the famous Upanisadic utterance *tattvamasi* as something different from ordinary or descriptive language and something above the Ayerian criticism of the demonstrative use of language. Āruni's demonstration that multiplicity, a matter of only empirical information is unreal since it is a difference in name arising from speech. The author's analysis of 'Self-consciousness' or the Knowledge of the knower in the philosophy of yājñavalkya is striking by original. He aptly observes that Yājñavalkya has drawn the attention of Maitreyī from the irrelevant metaphysical questions regarding consciousness after death or liberation and pleads for philosophical enlightenment i.e. self complete knowledge of the non-dual reality.

Dr. Nayak's analysis of the problem of personal identity is perhaps the most original portion in the volume and his correlation of this concept with problems of reincarnation and subtle body based on Sāṃkhya exegesis is also very suggestive. He rightly states that subtle body (*Sūkṣma śārīra*) is a logical necessity for making survival, rebirth and reincarnation meaningful. The age-long dispute of the Sāṃkhya and Nyāya theories of causality i. e. whether the effect pre-exists in the cause or is something newly 'produced' is discarded very convincingly by the author as merely a verbal dispute without any factual significance. It is immaterial whether we should use the word 'manifestation' or 'production' when both of these refer to the same fact.

Except for the incomplete transliteration of Sanskrit terms the printing is good. The book is indispensable for the students of Indian philosophy.

A. C. Sukla